

JULY, 1935



# THE COMMUNIST

The Supreme Court, the New Deal and the Class Struggle  
ALEX BITTELMAN



REPORTS TO THE MAY MEETING OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Recent Political Developments and Some Problems  
of the United Front EARL BROWDER



Organizational Problems of the Party JACK STACHEL



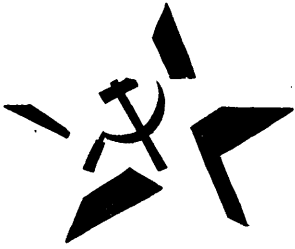
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# The Supreme Court, the New Deal and the Class Struggle

By ALEX BITTELMAN

THE Supreme Court decision on the N.R.A. reflects and brings to a head all the fundamental features of the present day class struggle in the United States. Arising on the basis of the deepening general crisis of capitalism and the continuation of the depression of a "special kind", the outburst of the Supreme Court emphasizes the fact that the American bourgeoisie is determined more than ever before to make the masses pay for the crisis, and to push forward more energetically the process of fascization and war preparation. More specifically, the American bourgeoisie is determined to *strengthen all existing barriers and to set up new ones against the rising tide of mass struggle for legislation favorable to the workers, toiling farmers, Negroes and poor middle classes of the cities.* Furthermore, the Supreme Court decision brings to light the acute sharpening of all the contradictions of the New Deal and the sharpening of the contradictions within the bourgeoisie itself. Most important, it raises to a new and higher level the question of *class struggle versus class collaboration* and opens up *new and wider possibilities* for the united front and for the struggle for the revolutionary way out—for a Soviet America.

## RESIST THE NEW CAPITALIST OFFENSIVE

Events have already fully confirmed the position of the Communist Party that the decision of the Supreme Court was a signal for a fresh capitalist offensive upon the standards and democratic rights of the masses, an offensive in which Roosevelt's New Deal will continue to play its special role of using "different methods" to accelerate rather than hamper the carrying out of the class policies of the monopolies in the United States. (See Letter of Communist Party to Socialist Party, *Daily Worker*, May 31, 1935.) Our Party took the position that the imperative demand of the hour is to *resist the capitalist offensive by unity of action*, guarding against all tendencies to delay action, to procrastinate and to *wait* for new N.R.A.'s or such other anti-labor measures as the Wagner and Guffey Bills.

Our Party said: answer the new capitalist attack by strike actions,

demonstrations and mass organizing drives to build the unions as militant fighting organizations of the workers; daily vigilance and mass struggle for the defense of the democratic rights of the masses; intensify manifold the mobilization of the masses to struggle for unemployment relief and insurance, for union wages on relief projects, for Negro rights and farmers' demands, for the payment of the bonus to the ex-soldiers—in support of H.R. 2827, the Bonus Bill, the Farmer and Negro Bills. Press forward with the struggle for the organization of a mass anti-capitalist Labor Party built upon the trade unions. Recruit the most advanced fighters into the Communist Party and build it into the mass party of the American proletariat and leader of all exploited. Above all *broaden the united front* for which the Supreme Court decision has created *new possibilities*.

The May meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, though held before the Supreme Court decision, has elaborated a series of measures designed to help the toiling masses of this country to meet effectively precisely the kind of situation created by that decision. The speedy carrying out of the organizational decisions of the Central Committee which formed the main topic of its deliberations (see reports to the Central Committee elsewhere in this issue) will help the Communist Party membership and organizations, especially the units and Sections, to give better leadership to the masses in their struggle against the present capitalist offensive.

The unfolding of the mass resistance to the new capitalist offensive is endangered at the present time from two sources. One is: that resistance will become merely a word, an empty phrase, that no practical steps will be taken in the industries and generally actually to *organize* this resistance. And the second is the fresh crop of "new N.R.A." illusions, hope and dependence upon Congressional lobbying for legislation which is bad for the masses, a tendency to make this a substitute for immediate mass resistance to the capitalist offensive and for mass organized struggle for legislation that is truly in the interests of the toiling masses.

We must be more specific and locate the sources of these dangers. And, in doing so, we turn first to the decisions of the last session of the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor. What did it have to say on the Supreme Court decision and on the tasks arising therefrom? These are summarized in the radio speech of William Green made public on June 7, 1935, and with it we will deal here.

Green said (*New York Times*, June 7) that, "We know now that the blow struck by the Supreme Court, through its famous decision, fell with great force and most destructive effect upon working people and those dependent upon them". That is true. That

was what the Communist Party said *immediately* upon learning of the contents of the Supreme Court decision which would be more appropriately characterized as "infamous". While taking no exception to these words of Green, we must, however, point out that they do not convey the *full* import of the decision of the Supreme Court. It was a heavy blow at the working people *and* a signal for a whole fresh and more vicious offensive upon them by the capitalist class. To realize that is very important.

And who is *responsible* for this decision? The Supreme Court, of course. Everybody says that and so does Green. But what is not being said by everybody, Green included, is that the Supreme Court is not something extraneous or "alien" to the United States, not some foreign born or foreign minded agitator who, if you believe Hearst, is always at the bottom of our troubles, but a very much "American" and very much "honored" institution of *government*. This, too, must be said, and more. The Supreme Court is a basic branch of the "democracy" of this country, the highest institution of the judicial branch of the American government, a pillar of the Constitution. And isn't Green one of those (not the only one) who always holds up this "democracy", this form of government, as the ideal for the masses, as their anchor and only salvation? Isn't Green always telling the masses that this form of government is better for the working people than the Soviet form? Does it not follow that all these lyrics of Green about the American "democracy" were and are sheer ballyhoo, to say the least?

What must be said is that the decision of the Supreme Court exposes most dramatically the whole intolerable sham and hypocrisy of the bourgeois democracy of the United States; that it shows up this "democracy", and the Constitution upon which it is based, as thoroughly anti-labor, anti-farmer, anti-Negro, anti-democratic, anti-everything that is in the interests of the "working people and those dependent upon them"; that it is, and cannot be anything else, but an organ of the capitalist class to oppress the masses and to keep them in subjection to their exploiters; that it is, what the Communists have always said it was, a democracy for the capitalists and a brutal dictatorship of the monopolies for the masses, whereas the Soviet form of government is a democracy for the masses and a merciless dictatorship against their exploiters.

The Supreme Court decision raises in all its magnitude the question of the revolutionary way out as *against* the capitalist way out, of the struggle for Soviet democracy as *against* the dictatorship of the capitalist class, which is embodied in the existing bourgeois democracy.

Not only does Green fail to say all these fundamental truths, but



he exerts himself powerfully to *hide from the masses* these truths without which they cannot achieve their liberation. Green manages to discuss the responsibility for the Supreme Court decision in such a way as almost to apologize for and whitewash the true instigators of this decision—the *monopolies, the big capitalists*. He speaks vaguely of “those who have hailed the Supreme Court’s decision with exclamations of joy and approval” (*Ibid.*). But who are they? Is it the United States Steel Corporation and the Steel Trust? Is it the crowd that exploits the automobile workers? Is it the rubber and coal barons? Is it the big bankers? Green mentions none of these and for “sufficient” reasons; these are the people with whom Green and Co. have been *class collaborating*, especially through the N.R.A., since the New Deal came into existence. But this is all the more reason for the workers and toilers to know that it is precisely these “collaborators” of Green, the people with whom he was establishing “the partnership between Labor and Capital” (in auto, steel, textile, rubber, etc.), under the aegis of the New Deal—that it is these people that are primarily responsible for the Supreme Court decision which, by Green’s own admission, “fell with great force and most destructive effect upon working people and those dependent upon them”.

Green hides these facts, but they must not be hidden—otherwise we may have a repetition of the same treacheries and even worse. Instead of speaking plainly of the monopolies and big capitalists as the prime instigators of the Supreme Court decision, Green prefers to talk about “the minority among those engaged in the manufacture of goods and commodities, who violate every rule of business ethics” and about a “majority of employers” who “sincerely and honestly wish to maintain decent wage standards and humane conditions of employment” (*Ibid.*) This is very misleading, Brother Green. Do you mean by “minority” the auto manufacturers with whom you established the “merit clause” or do you mean the proverbial “chiseler” of General Johnson, the two-by-four cleaner and dyer whom the N.R.A. dragged to court as the *outstanding* enemy of the N.R.A.? Do you mean by minority the steel and textile magnates, with whom you established “truces” under the auspices of the N.R.A., or do you mean some poor devil of a push-cart peddler, another of Johnson’s “chisellers”? Speak out, Brother Green, on these very important questions. The workers must know the *main* enemy, the chief instigator of the Supreme Court decision, in order to know where to direct *labor’s* main blows. Is it to be against the magnates of steel, coal, rubber, textile, auto—or is it to be only against the street peddlers?

But that is not all. Having said that the monopolies, big capital,

is the prime mover of the Supreme Court decision and bears the main responsibility for it, we must now find out what was the role of the New Deal itself and of its supporters in bringing about that decision.

HOW THE NEW DEAL PAVED THE WAY FOR THE  
SUPREME COURT DECISION

Green, naturally, shies away from this question. More than that, he tries to create the impression that the New Deal (and its N.R.A.) was *only* a "victim" of the Supreme Court. But that is not so. The New Deal itself, and its supporters in the labor movement, have a goodly share of responsibility for the Supreme Court decision and its menacing consequences for the toiling masses of this country. If the position of our Party is correct, and nobody can show that it is not, that the Supreme Court decision signalizes the opening of a fresh capitalist offensive upon the standards and democratic rights of the masses, then it is equally true that the New Deal, its N.R.A., and its supporters in the labor movement *have helped to ease the way, to prepare the ground, for this offensive.*

Let us put the question more specifically and concretely.

Suppose that beginning with March, 1933, when the New Deal came into existence, the majority of workers in auto, steel, textile, rubber and in the other industries had followed the proposals, not of Green and Co., but of the Communist Party and of the rank and file movements in the unions. What would have happened? These workers would have placed *no confidence* in the New Deal and N.R.A., would have utilized to the full the confusion and demoralization that prevailed among the capitalists during those months in order to build their unions, to strike, to wrest the maximum possible concessions from their class enemies in wages, hours, unemployment relief and insurance, etc. They would have pressed forward with all their might *to build up their own organized power* for economic and political struggle, ready to deliver telling blows for the betterment of their conditions. They might not have won in each particular instance all of their demands but they would have built up such a power of their own as would be able to defend their interests.

It should be remembered that the past two years were characterized by a great sweep of radicalization of the working class and its allies. This radicalization expressed itself primarily in great strike struggles, some of which have materialized and others have become dissipated as a result of the class collaboration policy with the N.R.A. At the same time we were witnessing a rise of a powerful tendency among the masses to find new ways and new paths

to independent, working class, political action. This meant that as far as the mood and attitude of the masses was concerned, the situation was greatly matured for a powerful mass resistance to the offensive of the bourgeoisie, and in some instances even to the beginning of serious moves of counter-offensive against the class enemy. In such a situation the class struggle policy advocated by the Communist Party would have enabled the American working class and its allies to fight successfully against the capitalist offensive and against the N.R.A. policies which did not hamper this offensive, but helped it.

Had this been the case the N.R.A. *would not have succeeded*, as it largely did, in raising the profits of the monopolies at the expense of the masses, in hampering the growth of trade-union organizations and paving the way for company unionism, in delaying the introduction of unemployment insurance, in driving down wage standards, in setting up a "\$19 monthly wage" as a new American standard of living of the American workers, and legalizing the emergence of an American peasantry. The N.R.A. and its supporters in the labor movement would not have succeeded to the extent that they did in dissipating the rising struggles of the American toiling masses. And what would have been the result? The result would have been that the working class today would have been in a much stronger position to resist the new and sharper offensive of the monopolies that was signaled by the Supreme Court decision. More than that—it would have been able to take a broad counter-offensive *immediately*.

But here an important question must be raised. Could the New Deal have succeeded in promoting the capitalist offensive of the past two years and in preparing the ground for the new attacks upon the masses *without the aid of supporters in the labor movement*? No, it could not, not to the extent that it did. This is evident in every instance where the Communist Party was able, together with the rank-and-file movement in the unions, *to expose* convincingly before the masses the pro-capitalist role of the New Deal and of its supporters in the labor movement, *to isolate* even partly the New Deal labor leaders, to infuse the masses with the spirit and consciousness of class *struggle* as against class *collaboration*, to do good trade union work, to follow correct strike policies as outlined by the Communist International and by our Party, to fight for the united front and trade-union unity, to build the Communist Party in the large enterprises of the basic industries.

This is also evident in all those instances where the workers in their bulk, while still retaining illusions in the N.R.A. and following in the main its supporters in the labor movement, were

depending also upon their trade-union organization and upon their own strength in mass struggle. That this is so can be seen in the lessons of such struggles during the N.R.A. as the Pacific Coast Marine Strike and the San Francisco General Strike, the textile strike, the isolated strike struggles in steel and rubber and auto, the readiness of the workers in mining and garments to use their unions and the strike weapon to defend their interests. Everywhere it can, and should be shown, *that wherever the workers had trade-union organization before the N.R.A. or undertook earnestly to build up such organization during the N.R.A., wherever they were able to break through the New Deal maneuvers and assert their organized power in struggle or serious threat of struggle despite the N.R.A., there they suffered least from the capitalist offensive of the past two years and even made some slight advances.* Even capitalist sources of information confirm this appraisal of the N.R.A., in the first instance, the report of the Planning Division of the N.R.A. itself and also the investigations of the Brookings Institute. The latter, true, is opposed to the N.R.A., but more fundamentally it is opposed to the working-class and the trade-union movement and is therefore not apt to exaggerate facts which demonstrate that the working class and its allies can only rely upon its strength and the policy of class struggle.

From this it follows that, to the extent to which the workers followed Green & Co. and relied upon the New Deal to help them, neglecting their own organization and struggle, to that extent the workers allowed themselves to become demobilized in the face of the capitalist offensive and the anti-labor maneuvers of the New Deal, to that extent they suffered the full blow of the capitalist offensive, and vice versa, to the extent that the workers did not follow Green & Co., did not rely upon the New Deal but upon their own organized strength and struggle, to that extent they suffered least from the offensive and in some instances even made some advances.

For instance: some miners, garment workers, marine workers are still under the illusion that they did derive some advantages under the N.R.A. How does such an illusion maintain itself? First, because it is cultivated among the workers by the reformists, by the New Deal supporters in the labor movement. Second, because the Communists and the rank-and-file movement in the unions have not yet succeeded in showing the masses that it was through their own strength and organization, their own readiness to fight or actual fighting, not through the N.R.A. but against the N.R.A. (its codes, boards, "truces" and what not), that they succeeded in getting the advantages which they mistakenly attribute to the N.R.A.

Is it not clear that Green & Co., the supporters of the New Deal in the labor movement, have helped the capitalist offensive during the past two years? Is it not clear that they have helped the New Deal to prepare the ground for the present fresh offensive which was signalized by the Supreme Court decision? It is clear that without Green & Co. the capitalists and the New Deal could not have accomplished these results. From this follows an important lesson for the American workers and all toilers that the policy of class collaboration inevitably leads to working class defeat and a worsening of the conditions of the masses; that the policy of class struggle is the only policy that is in the interests of the working class and its allies.

The Supreme Court decision raises this question to a new and high level. And in this way: the reformist policy of class collaboration was brought to a high point in the support given by Green, Lewis & Co. to the New Deal, in their participation in the N.R.A. They themselves, the top reformist leadership of the A. F. of L., so represented the N.R.A. to the masses. They said it was a new "charter for labor", an instrument to embody "the partnership of Labor and Capital" in industry, a means to abolish the class struggle and to establish "class peace". In other words, it was to be the very embodiment and crown of the reformist policy of class collaboration, its pride and greatest achievement, as against the policy of class struggle championed by the Communist Party and the rank-and-file movement. It was a test of two policies fighting in the labor movement: the reformist policy of class collaboration, or the proletarian policy of class struggle. And what did the test show? It showed that the policy of class collaboration served the interests of the employers and not the interests of the workers; it showed that the policy of class struggle, the policy advocated by the Communist Party, is the only policy that serves the interests of the workers and all exploited.

What is it to be now, after this latest test, class collaboration again or class struggle? That is the question. And to this question the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. has already given the answer: it is to be class collaboration. Fortunately the American working class is learning from its experiences. This has been shown in the growing mass radicalization all through the N.R.A., and *now* the membership of the A. F. of L. is drawing up a balance sheet of the last two years and is beginning to draw conclusions which depart from the conclusions of Green, Lewis & Co. Among the local functionaries of the unions (and even among some of the middle functionaries) a process of differentiation is taking place—all of which, but especially the radicalization of the masses, creates

more favorable conditions than ever before for class struggle policies as against class collaboration, for wider united front actions, for a quicker realization of the task of organizing the unorganized and for trade-union unity, for independent working class political action as against the so-called "non-partisan" policy of the top leadership of the A. F. of L.

Are we correct, though, in saying that the latest decisions of the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. mean the continuation of the bankrupt policies of class collaboration? The facts permit no other conclusion. First, we take Green's declaration of policy, the radio speech already quoted. And what do we find there? We find there the following: (a) a warning to the employers that the collapse of the N.R.A. "will mean strife, strikes and industrial conflict because the workers of the nation will not willingly submit to a destruction of code standards, reduction in wages and increases in hours of work" (*ibid.*). But we find there *no direct appeal to the workers to organize strikes against the capitalist attacks*. More than that. We see no evidence of any practical steps by the Executive Council to *help* the workers organize for these struggles. All the known facts point in the opposite direction. Mike Tighe still is allowed to stand in the way of the organization of the steel workers and of building up of the A.A. Yet it is clear that the interests of the steel workers, the interests of their struggle against the offensive of the steel magnates, demand that Tighe and his gang be removed from the steel situation and the way opened for the unification of the union and the organization of the unorganized along the lines of the program of the National Emergency Committee of the expelled lodges of the A.A. What is happening in the auto industry? The Executive Council of the A. F. of L., and its representative in that industry, continue to hamper the building up of an industrial mass union to defend the auto workers against the offensive of the employers.

We also should ask what is happening in mining. The Lewis leadership supported by the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. is maneuvering to prevent the miners from striking for new and substantial concessions from the mine operators. This the Lewis leadership seeks to accomplish by foisting upon the miners the Guffey Bill, by preventing the materialization of the miners' strike with the promise of the Guffey Bill. But what is the Guffey Bill? It is a small N.R.A. which, no doubt, will benefit certain groups of the mine operators but cannot benefit the miners. It can make the conditions of the miners even worse by tying them down to what is, in fact, compulsory arbitration and preventing them from using their power for a real improvement of their conditions. One could

cite indefinitely from most industries to show that the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. either does nothing to help the workers in the industries to resist the capitalist offensive, or is doing everything to hamper the organization of this resistance.

In view of these indisputable facts, is it not obvious that Green, Lewis & Co. are continuing the old, detestable and bankrupt policy of class collaboration? But there is still more evidence to that effect. The Executive Council has mapped out a program of legislation which it will sponsor. *And point one of that program is the demand for a new N.R.A.* And point two is the old Wagner Bill. What is the main purpose of this bill? It is to create such an instrument which the government and the capitalist class could use in order to establish compulsory arbitration and to outlaw strikes. It is an instrument to paralyze the workers with nice phrases and promises, to prevent them from striking back at their enemies while the capitalist enemy is carrying on the offensive. And point three repeats the demand for the passage of the Black-Connery Thirty-Hour Week Bill, but again without any provision for no decrease in weekly pay as demanded by the Communist Party. And point four calls for "the passage of social-security legislation" without saying a word about *what kind* of legislation—Roosevelt's fake security gestures or such genuine proposals as H.R. 2827. And, lastly, point five calls for "the enactment of the Guffey Coal Bill" which is a sort of a miniature N.R.A. with all the anti-labor features of the "big" N.R.A. This is the program of legislation. And how is it to be fought for? Presumably in the same old way of lobbying in Congressional halls, selling labor's independence to capitalist politicians, tying up the working class to capitalist parties under the guise of "non-partisan political action", weakening and demoralizing one of labor's chief weapons of struggle—*independent working-class* political action. But that is the same old way of class collaboration.

#### LABOR LEGISLATION, THE CONSTITUTION AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE CAPITALIST OFFENSIVE

In the opening paragraph of this article we have already noted the fact that the Supreme Court decision shows, among other things, the determination of the American bourgeoisie to fortify the existing barriers and to set up new ones against the rising tide of mass struggle for legislation in the interests of the masses. The fact is, we are dealing now with such a rising tide. The great mass support for the Unemployment Relief and Insurance Bill (H.R. 2827), brought forward by the Communist Party, is direct evidence of this fact. Indirectly and distortedly the same fact reflects itself in the whole Roosevelt New Deal which was designed, not as

Green says, "to save the nation", but to save capitalism by promising the masses favorable legislation and to cheat the masses of such legislation. In a similar way it shows itself in the "promises" of Coughlin and Long to legislate poverty out of existence and social justice into existence. The American bourgeoisie, seeing this rising tide for social legislation in favor of the masses, which goes contrary to its major policies of securing a capitalist way out of the crisis by making the masses pay for it, and seeing the growing movement for an anti-capitalist Labor Party which will embrace the masses in the fight for such legislation, carries through various hostile moves against it.

Some sections of the monopolist bourgeoisie, its most reactionary and aggressive section, instigate all sorts of *direct and open* struggle against any sort of legislation that would favor the masses. The "Liberty League", the Republican Party and similar groups in the Democratic Party follow this line, and these are the forces that instigated and brought about the Supreme Court decision. This decision wants to make sure that the Supreme Court will stand guard against any legislation favorable to the masses that Congress and the President might be compelled to pass by the struggles of the masses themselves.

Other sections of the bourgeoisie, while seeking the same thing (to prevent genuine legislation for the masses), yet believe in doing it with different methods. Roosevelt, and the New Deal generally, stand for these different methods to carry out the same class aim of the bourgeoisie. With these methods we are well familiar. They are: make promises but don't fulfill them; if pressed by mass struggles, pretend that you are trying to fulfill these promises by some fake legislative measures, at the same time don't shrink from using force and violence against the masses when and where their movements "threaten" to get out of hand.

It is not, of course, as though Hoover and Roosevelt had sat around a table and divided these "functions" and methods between them. The class struggle is not so simple. The divisions within the bourgeoisie are real because at the basis of these divisions lie conflicting economic and political interests of competing capitalist groups. At the basis is the conflict over the division of profits (the spoils from the robbery of the masses) whose margin is narrowing due to the general crisis of capitalism and the maturing of the revolutionary crisis, though unevenly, in all capitalist countries. Therefore the divisions among the capitalists are real, not fictitious, and the Supreme Court decision shows a great sharpening of these divisions.

In the N.R.A. we had a very good demonstration of how these conflicts between the rival interests among the bourgeoisie are



developing. These rivalries, as is well-known, are becoming continually sharper because the markets are not expanding but in the main continue to narrow down. Therefore, the struggle for these markets becomes sharper and sharper. And so in the N.R.A. codes and in the N.R.A. boards, we had this continual struggle between the various capitalist groups to secure control over these organizations and their policies and, of course, as was inevitable, the control rested in the hands of the bigger capitalists, the monopolists. That is why the smaller capitalists were opposed to the N.R.A., and those in the Supreme Court (like Brandeis) who undertook to speak for them also voted for the nullification of the N.R.A. legislation.

However, it is a division of the "best" methods of how to save capitalism at the expense of the masses, of how to dissipate their movements and struggles, of how to fortify the dictatorship of monopoly capital. And what is the result? While these divisions tend to weaken the offensive power of the bourgeoisie against the workers and toilers, they (the conflicting capitalist methods) work for the realization of one and the same class policy, and thus all of them contribute towards the realization of the aims of the capitalist offensive. It depends upon the struggles of the working class and its allies, upon their political understanding, not to be deceived by the Roosevelts and the New Deals into placing confidence in them; it depends upon the class struggle and the revolutionary leadership to make these divisions within the bourgeoisie a source of weakness to the capitalist class and a contribution to the strength of the working class. That was what the January Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party meant when it said: "Only the class struggle against the *entire policy of the bourgeoisie* can defend the interests of the masses and crush the plans of finance capital and fascism."

The position of the Communist Party on the question of struggle for legislation in the interest of the masses is well known. We have been fighting militantly to organize the masses to struggle for such outstanding legislative measures as H.R. 2827 and have also brought forward other proposals for legislation such as the Bonus Bill, the Farmers' Relief Bill, the Bill for Negro Rights, proposals to outlaw company unionism, for the untrammelled right to organize and strike, for the 30-hour week without reduction in weekly pay, etc. And we also pointed out that the interests of the struggle for such and similar legislation, as part and parcel of the daily mass struggle against the capitalist offensive, demand the organization of an anti-capitalist Labor Party—for which there is a growing movement among the masses.

But there is something new in the situation. It is, as already point-

ed out, (a) the rising tide of mass struggle for such labor and social legislation, (b) the new measures of the reactionary monopolies to check it, such as, the Supreme Court decision, (c) Roosevelt's "new" New Deal maneuvers to accomplish the same thing by different methods, (d) the more "systematized" program of legislation of the Executive Council of the A. F. of L., and (e) the various proposals for a constitutional amendment. These developments require a fresh restatement of our fundamental position on the question of struggle for labor and social legislation.

1. These developments create a *wider base* for the broadest united front of the working class and its allies (toiling farmers, Negroes, poor urban middle classes, ex-soldiers) for struggle for labor and social legislation favorable to the masses and against the capitalist offensive generally. We emphasize the struggle for genuine legislation in the interests of the masses (such as the Bills that the Communist Party has been sponsoring and supporting) as against Roosevelt's fake and anti-labor legislation (his "Security" Bill, etc.) and against such anti-labor legislation as the Wagner Bill.

2. We must press forward energetically with the struggle for such wide united fronts on any one or group of legislative proposals that meet the above test. The trade unions are the most important field for this work; at the same time this struggle must be brought into all mass organizations of the toilers, into the shops, and to the masses generally. Needless to say, we must work more persistently than before to win the Socialist Party, its membership and organizations for united front actions on this issue. We must raise the question of the role and functions of the so-called Legislative Committees that exist today in many unions, locals and Central Labor bodies. In most cases these are simply lobbying committees in the hands of one or two individuals who follow the "time honored" policy of non-partisan politics which means selling the interests of the workers to the capitalist parties. In view of the unfolding mass struggle for social and labor legislation, it is necessary that we advocate in the unions and among the workers generally that such Legislative Committees in the unions become transformed into organs of mass mobilization and struggle, and that similar committees be set up in all local unions and Central Labor bodies. And as the situation becomes mature for further organizational steps, and that may be very soon, we should advocate the setting up of local Committees for Labor and Social Legislation, these committees to be based upon representatives of local unions and to include representatives of all labor, farmer, Negro and poor middle class organizations. It is clear that with the existing and developing mass movement for a

Labor Party, such bodies would prove of invaluable importance to the further promotion for the struggle for a Labor Party.

3. At the same time we must guard against and combat all reformist efforts (Green's policy and that of the Right wing of the Socialist Party as well as Thomas' vacillations) to foist upon the movement for labor legislation anti-labor Bills (Wagner and Guffey Bills), or to make this movement a vehicle for new N.R.A.s, or to degenerate this movement into a lobbying proposition along the lines of collaboration with the old capitalist parties and to make this a substitute for mass organization and struggle along the lines of independent working class political action. On the basis of the widest united front of struggle for labor and social legislation, we must fight to win the masses to the proposition that the *primary task* is mass resistance to the capitalist offensive in *the industries* and generally by strikes, demonstrations, sympathy strikes, etc. We must prove to the masses, on the basis of the united front, that the struggle for labor and social legislation will be served best by daily mass resistance to capitalist attacks upon the standards and democratic rights of the masses and, in its turn, will help this resistance. We point out at the same time that any effective fight for labor and social legislation demands breaking with the capitalist parties and capitalist politics. It demands the application of working class politics of the proletariat and its allies and the organization of a mass anti-capitalist Labor Party based upon the trade unions.

4. We are not opposed to the organization of a powerful mass movement to fight for a Constitutional amendment *to take away from the Supreme Court the power to nullify labor and social legislation that the masses can compel Congress to pass*. At the same time we resolutely combat the maneuvers of Roosevelt, which the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. seems inclined to follow, that no legislation for the masses can be adopted before such a Constitutional amendment is realized. And since Roosevelt himself said that it would take from five to ten years to get such an amendment, this means the abandonment of the struggle for genuine labor and social legislation. Therefore we must show to the masses that, first, it lies within their power to compel Congress to pass favorable legislation *now*, before an amendment is ever carried, provided the masses organize and fight for it, and not by lobbying and capitalist politics but by exerting all their independent power in the economic and political struggles, by building in struggle powerful unions and a Labor Party to fight the capitalist class. Secondly, any further attempt of the monopolies to stop such legislation through Supreme Court action, and such attempts will be made, the organized working class and its allies will then be able to meet with the most determined

counter-attack which may be strong enough to *override* Supreme Court nullification and *compel in this way* an amendment of the Constitution itself.

5. Therefore we say: the only effective way to fight for a Constitutional amendment to take away from the Supreme Court the power to nullify legislation which the toiling masses compel Congress to pass is to carry on this fight *as part and parcel of the daily mass struggle* against the capitalist offensive and *for immediate* legislation favorable to the masses. The masses must not permit Roosevelt and his supporters in the labor movement to make the demand for the Constitutional amendment *a substitute* for the daily mass struggles and for immediate legislation for genuine Unemployment and Social Insurance (H.R. 2827) and similar measures. Nor can it be permitted to delay, weaken or hamper these daily struggles. The masses must be shown that a Constitutional amendment of the above nature can be gotten only as a *by-product* of the daily mass struggles against the capitalist offensive and for the immediate adoption by Congress of labor and social legislation genuinely favorable to the masses.

WE FIGHT FOR A SOVIET CONSTITUTION—FOR A WORKERS'  
AND FARMERS' GOVERNMENT

In mapping out a policy of the working class and its allies in the present situation, it is absolutely necessary to take due account of the policies and tactics of the capitalist class and its parties. Only thus can the working class fight effectively its class enemy.

The major policy of the American bourgeoisie is to find a way out of the crisis at the expense of the masses and it seeks to achieve this aim on the road of fascization and war. All bourgeois policies in America, despite their difference in methods, seek to accomplish this aim. The new question which we must answer now is this: how does the American bourgeoisie propose to meet the *present situation* which came to a head in the Supreme Court decision and was further precipitated by it? What tactics and slogans is the bourgeoisie formulating to meet this situation? In the main outline these are already visible. And what are they?

1. To proceed with the fresh offensive upon the standards and democratic rights of the masses and to adopt a more rapid tempo of fascization and war preparations.

2. To carry out these fascization measures *by destroying in practice and piecemeal* all the democratic rights of the masses without altering the Constitution, on the basis of and by means of the Constitution, and under the slogan of preserving the Constitution and the "democratic institutions" based upon it.

3. To counter and challenge the Communist central slogan

"For a Soviet America" and to arouse a wave of national chauvinism under the cloak of defending "Americanism". As we already pointed out, the activities and schemes of Long and Coughlin are directed precisely towards this end and from a different front, the front which combats Roosevelt from the "Left"; Sinclair's scheme tends in the same direction.

4. To attempt to preserve the so-called "two-party system" and to prevent the crystallization of a new major political party.

It should be added that the bourgeoisie and its parties are already actively engaged in preparations for the national elections of 1936.

Only points 2 and 3 have to be elaborated. And on this we begin by asking: is it true that all bourgeois political parties and groups are bringing forth the question of the Constitution as a major political issue in the country? Yes, it is true. The Supreme Court decision raised this question. Roosevelt picked it up, gingerly, it is true, but he did pick it up and projected the idea that the Constitution has to be further developed and "adjusted" to the needs of the "modern era" and in the "spirit" of Americanism and "American democracy". Then came Hoover and charged Roosevelt with trying to introduce into the United States a new form of government, a "parliamentary" form which, according to the "Great Engineer", is incompatible with the Constitution and the "democratic institutions" of the United States. This was followed by the "Grass Root" Republican Conference in Springfield, Ill., where the chief issue was made the preservation of the Constitution and the "States Rights".

But this is not all. The Executive Council of the A. F. of L. also picks up this issue and declares, through William Green, "that if the Constitution cannot be interpreted in the light of present day facts it should be amended so as to suit the needs of existing economic and social conditions" (*New York Times*, June 8, 1935). At the same time, or even a little earlier, Norman Thomas declares that: "There is at this moment one question, and one only, which overshadows all else" (*Socialist Call*, June 1, 1935. *Our emphasis*). And what is that supreme question? It is: "Has the supreme legislative body in America no power whatever to legislate effectively for the social and economic welfare of the whole nation?" (*Ibid.*)

What is the meaning of these developments which thrust forward the question of the Constitution as the central question in the political life of the country?

It is, first of all, a brilliant confirmation of the Communist International analysis given at the Thirteenth Plenum, and elaborated further since, that the revolutionary crisis is maturing, though unevenly and not uniformly, in all capitalist countries, which meant that the question of *power*, of nature and form of government, has

become a central issue. In response to this fact the Thirteenth Plenum of the Comintern has instructed all Communist Parties in the capitalist countries to make the slogan Soviet Power the central slogan of their mass work. This meant that in some countries, where the revolutionary crisis is more advanced, this slogan was to be one of preparation for action, for struggle for power. In other countries, where the revolutionary crisis is less advanced and matures slower, this slogan was to be the central slogan of mass agitation and propaganda closely interwoven with all the daily struggles of the toilers. But in all countries, it was to be the central slogan of Communist mass work.

The "exceptional" United States has again proven no exception. The Communist Party of this country went to the masses with this slogan and with no small success. And then what happened? Out of the very New Deal and the N.R.A., which were supposed to eliminate class struggle, struggle for power, and to establish once and for all that American bourgeois democracy has in itself some sort of a secret to adjust itself to all changes without the need of a *revolutionary change*—that out of this "experiment" in preventing revolution comes a political situation which thrusts forward the question of power, of form of government, to *first place* and compels *all parties and classes* to take a position, or to restate their positions, on this question. The haters and distorters of dialectical materialism undoubtedly are having a bad time.

And so, what is the conclusion? Developments are moving our way. Larger masses than ever before are drawn into political discussions and struggles in which the central question, posed also by the bourgeoisie, by all its groups, is the question of power, of form of government. And we will have from now on much greater possibilities to present to the masses and to win larger numbers of them to our, the Communist, answer to this question, which is: Soviet Power, a Soviet America, a Soviet Constitution, a government of Workers and Farmers. The revolutionary, the Bolshevik way out versus the capitalist way.

*We fight for a Soviet—a Workers' and Farmers'—Constitution as Against the Existing Capitalist Constitution.*

And we say: the American bourgeoisie, to establish its power in order to open the way for the free development of a capitalist system of society, has made a revolution (in 1776) and established a Constitution. This was a great step forward in the progress of human society. Our class, the working class, and the toiling masses generally were even then the only truly democratic force in the bourgeois revolution but the power went to the anti-democratic bourgeois groups. These have established the Constitution—the Constitution for the capitalist class.

The American working class, led by the Communist Party, carries forward the revolutionary and democratic traditions of that epoch. In what way? In seeking to prepare a *revolution* that will establish the power of the working class (allied with the toiling farmers and Negroes) in order to build a socialist system of society in the United States, a system which is already triumphant on one-sixth of the globe, in the Soviet Union. And for this purpose the working class of this country fights to establish its own Constitution—a Soviet Constitution, a Soviet form of government. This is the next great step forward in the development of the United States, a step radically different from the bourgeois revolution because the latter established the rule of the minority over the majority whereas the former will establish the rule of the overwhelming majority over the minority; the latter perpetuated class rule and exploitation whereas the former is the only way to the abolition of class divisions and exploitation. Therefore, we say: Forward to the Socialist Revolution and to a Soviet America.

We come to the masses with the following message: *Organize the united front, the united front with all workers and toilers and their organizations, for resisting the capitalist offensive, fighting for labor and social legislation, fighting for a constitutional amendment to curb the powers of the Supreme Court to annul legislation favorable to the masses and which they alone can compel Congress to pass. And on the basis of this struggle for the united front, in the process of its realization, we win the masses for the slogan 'Forward to the Socialist Revolution and to a Soviet America'.*

At the same time we must also say something else. We must say that the position of Green and the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. is a position in favor of the capitalist Constitution, a position that seeks to perpetuate capitalism and capitalist rule by amending the capitalist Constitution. This is totally different from a correct working class position on the question of amending the Constitution.

The correct working class position says: Let us fight against the capitalist offensive, let us wrest from our class enemies the maximum possible concessions for ourselves and our allies, let us defend at all costs our democratic rights and use them to strengthen ourselves and weaken our class enemy. Let us in this way also fight for a constitutional amendment to curb the powers of the Supreme Court to stop us from realizing concessions in the matter of labor and social legislation. But let us have no illusions that an amended Constitution will amend capitalism. Nothing of the sort can happen. Capitalist rule cannot be abolished by amending the capitalist Constitution. This rule has to be overthrown by revolution. When this is clearly understood by the working class vanguard, and the masses

are won to this idea by daily propaganda and agitation, then the struggle for a constitutional amendment to curb the powers of the Supreme Court will help the masses and will strengthen them against the capitalists.

But the position of Green-Lewis and Co. is different. They want to amend the Constitution in the hope that in this way they may be able to prevent the overthrow of capitalist rule; they want to save the Constitution (by amending it) in order to save capitalism. In this, of course, they cannot succeed, but they can raise illusions which will paralyze the struggles of the workers for a while and thus strengthen the capitalist offensive. This is good for the capitalists and bad for the workers and their allies; therefore, we must combat the position of Green-Lewis and Co. and expose it in the course of the united front struggle which includes also the struggle for the constitutional amendment.

Furthermore. The position of Green and the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. tends to make the working class and its allies *the tail end of Roosevelt's policies*, which means the tail end of the policies of the American bourgeoisie. It is Roosevelt's specific role, and the role of the New Deal as a whole, to hold the masses back from struggle against the capitalists by promises of "changing", "reforming", and "improving" capitalism and capitalist rule, at the same time using all the force and violence at his command to make sure that his promises "will work". Also in the present situation Roosevelt has projected the idea of perhaps amending the Constitution in order that he may be able "to fulfill his promises". But it is clear that this is only an alibi for explaining away the brutal violation of his promises. If Roosevelt were not a capitalist politician, which he is, but a working class leader fighting earnestly for the improvement of the conditions of the masses, he would never have been a candidate of the Democratic Party, he would never have become a Democratic Party President, but would be fighting in the ranks of the working class, building a party of its own and practising the principles of the class struggle. But being what he is, a capitalist politician who seeks to save capitalism and who is not even serious about his "promises" of reforming capitalism, it should be clear that his suggestion of amending the Constitution is an alibi and a *new bait* with which to catch and retain the masses from going forward with their struggle against the system which Roosevelt defends, although with different methods.

It seems that Green and Co. were only too glad to swallow this new bait of Roosevelt and, what is more important, they are trying now to make the masses swallow this same bait and be caught again on the hooks of the New Deal. And what would that mean? To be caught on the hook of the capitalist offensive, fascization and



war preparation. Because Roosevelt's policies—including his maneuver with the constitutional amendment—do not hamper but help the capitalist offensive.

Just see: Could the reactionary monopolies, the spearhead of the capitalist offensive, wish anything better than to have the toiling masses of this country line up something like this: with the Republican Party—against amending the Constitution; with the Democratic Party—for amending the Constitution? Why, that is the precise thing they are working for. This is their class tactic because it serves best their policies as outlined above. It will help to carry through the fresh offensive and the speedier tempo of fascization and war preparations since both these parties, with their special methods, would work for the carrying out of this common class policy. The reactionary monopolies might seek to place a Republican in the White House this time but they want Roosevelt and the Democratic Party to stand guard against the coming forward of any third, more "radical" party, and especially against the coming forward of a mass anti-capitalist Labor Party. In other words, whatever opposition rises in the country (and a good deal of it is rising) against the class policies of the bourgeoisie, the monopolies want Roosevelt to corral it. That is the two-party system.

Therefore the monopolies are anxious that the "inevitable" fight around the question of the Constitution should be so carried on that (a) it does not get off to the real issue (real for the working class) of a workers' Soviet Constitution as against the existing capitalist Constitution, (b) that the struggle *for* the constitutional amendment does not become a *class struggle* and part of the daily mass fight against the capitalist offensive, and (c) that this fight does not give rise to a mass powerful anti-capitalist Labor Party based on the trade unions.

This being the case, is it not clear that Green's manner of handling the constitutional amendment fits in precisely with the tactics of the monopolies and serves the class policies of the capitalists? Yes, it is. And this we must expose before the widest masses in the struggle for the united front.

We emphasize: in the struggle for the united front. By this we mean to guard against any tendency, slight as it may be, to slacken the work for the united front on the false ground that the other organizations, or their leaders, do not agree with our understanding of the question of power and a Soviet America. To do so would be rendering a great disservice to our movement and to the class struggle. We seek and fight for a united front *with all* toilers and their organizations, to fight jointly for any demand or set of demands that help the masses and strengthen them against the capitalist offensive in its various forms. That means also that we

seek a united front with all who wish to fight (not merely talk) for labor and social legislation of benefit to the masses and for a constitutional amendment regardless of what our partners may think today of the central question of a Soviet Constitution versus the capitalist Constitution. This is basic. That means the broadest possible united front. Naturally, in such united fronts there will now be all sorts of reformist ideas about the larger issues involved. And just because that is the fact we must be in it, in its front ranks, to swing the widest masses into struggle and in the process of this work to show the masses that our point of view is correct and the reformist point of view is wrong and detrimental to the masses.

This demands *full clarity* on the fundamental difference between the working class, the Communist position on these questions, and the reformist, the bourgeois position.

#### THE "CONSTITUTIONAL WAY TO SOCIALISM"

In accord with the above, we must now turn to an examination of the position of the Socialist Party and its various groups and tendencies.

It is evident that the rank and file of the Socialist Party has become aroused by the Supreme Court decision and is ready to participate in struggle against the capitalist offensive signalized by that decision. There can be no doubt that the bulk of the membership of the Socialist Party will from now on be less patient with those in their Party who, either openly or covertly, stand in the way of united front actions with the Communist Party. And this is our *fundamental* approach to the task of the moment. The May meeting of the Central Committee of our Party has made it mandatory that "Every section and every unit of the Party must become a center of united front formations and activities" with local trade unions, S.P. branches, and other organizations of the toilers.

At the same time we must carefully examine the official position of the Socialist Party, of its various groups and tendencies, in order to see what new approaches, if any, have been opened for united front actions, and what is the general line involved.

The official position of the Socialist Party, we take it, is the one expressed by its N.E.C., by Norman Thomas, and in a measure by the *Socialist Call*. Here we must say, first, that we do not find (and do not expect to find) a clear, consistent and unanimous line, not even in the *Socialist Call*. There are shades and shadings which are of importance. Thus we find that, whereas the "Official Statement of the Labor Committee of the Socialist Party" (*Socialist Call*, June 1, and further elaboration under Paul Porter's signature in the issue of June 8) places much emphasis upon the immediate need of organizing resistance to the capitalist offensive making the unions

and industries the center of this work, Norman Thomas in his own individual writings skips over this phase all too lightly making the fight for the constitutional amendment the issue "overshadowing" everything else. It is clear that the position expressed in the Official Statement of the Labor Committee is closer to the correct position than is Norman Thomas'. Or put in other words, the Official Statement is closer to the position of the Communist Party whereas Thomas' individual writings approximate closer to the position of the Right wing in the S.P. (the *New Leader*) and even to the position of William Green.

We don't want to be misunderstood. There is much in the Official Statement which is bad. For instance: it endorses the Black-Connery 30-hour week Bill *without* endorsing the Communist *addition* "without reduction in weekly pay". It should be clear that without this addition of our Party the Black-Connery Bill remains an anti-labor measure, a measure to stagger employment in the Hoover style, to make the ever diminishing wage fund pay for increased employment, instead of making profits pay for it. The Official Statement also contains an endorsement of the Wagner Bill—the Bill that seeks to establish compulsory arbitration and to outlaw strikes, *in fact* if not in so many words. True, the Official Statement makes its endorsement conditional upon a totally non-justified assumption "that its new changes do not open the way for compulsory arbitration". But, in the first place, compulsory arbitration is a basic feature of the Bill and was so through all its changes. Secondly, where is the guarantee that the new changes will not *strengthen* the compulsory arbitration features? And yet the S.P. already committed itself to push the Bill "with new vigor". And thirdly, why can't we agree on something that will outlaw company unionism, provide clearly for the untrammelled right to organize and strike, and to make sure that there is no compulsory arbitration in it, not even veiled? We ask: *Why this evident concession to the Right Wing and to Green when this clearly means sacrificing the interests of the workers and of the unions to the interests of the employers?*

But the statement also contains an endorsement of H.R. 2827. This is the Bill formulated and brought forward by our Party and supported by large masses. Why not unite efforts in the struggle for this and similar measures? In short, does it not follow from the whole trend of the Official Statement that the united front with the Communist Party is one of the chief demands of the present situation? It does follow. And it is our immediate task to make this clear to the S.P. membership and to its organizations. Our sections and units must make this their first order of business. The letter of our Central Committee to the Socialist Party on the Supreme Court decision (*Daily Worker*, May 31, 1935) outlines the

basis of our approach to the Socialist Party branches and members on this burning question.

On the question of the constitutional amendment there seems to exist a certain *formal* unanimity among the leading circles of the Socialist Party, but it is mainly formal. It occurs on the agreement to fight for the so-called Hillquit amendment to the Constitution. But, as already pointed out, the Official Statement makes this only one of the issues of combatting the capitalist offensive. Thomas tends to make it the "*overshadowing*" issue, and the Right Wing (*New Leader*) seeks to switch the whole struggle into the channels of Roosevelt or, if the masses will refuse to follow this course, into some sort of Rooseveltian "Labor" party. Obviously, serious divisions of import. And what do they mean to us? They mean that, basing ourselves upon the membership of the S.P. and its branches, we must press upon the sponsors of the Official Statement to put its fighting portions into life and to join hands with us in broadening the united front. In this way, the vacillation of Thomas and his tendency will be increased, no doubt, and chances are that he may feel compelled to vacillate a little more in the direction of struggle and united front. In this way also, the masses, and in the first place the Socialist Party membership, will become more convinced that the opposition of the Right Wing leadership (Waldman, Oneal, etc.) to the united front is detrimental to the interests of the working class and weakens the class struggle against the capitalist offensive. In other words, the united front will gain from it.

On the basis of such united front struggles, we must also proceed to clarify a few of the larger questions of policy and principle.

Thomas already indicated what he expects to accomplish with the struggle for a constitutional amendment. He said: "At least it delivers us from a judicial oligarchy and the dead hand of a written Constitution *which set all efforts at thoroughgoing peaceful change at naught*" (*Socialist Call*, June 8, 1935). This is a left-handed and diplomatic way of saying that if you amend the Constitution—along the lines of the Hillquit amendment—the working class of this country will be able to effect "thorough-going changes" (presumably socialism) *peacefully*. At least, there will then be greater chances of the working class in the United States coming to power without a revolution. That this is the meaning is further clarified as follows: "No matter how democratically we Socialists achieve power we can never use it for Socialist ends while the judicial oligarchy stands in the way" (*Ibid.*).

To put it all very plainly, it means: the fight for the Hillquit amendment and its incorporation in the Constitution will democratize the Constitution and the existing government and will thus enable the Socialist Party to build socialism peacefully. Once more:

the Constitutional, the "democratic", the "peaceful" way to socialism. If space permitted, it would be necessary to show that this is also somewhat of a departure from the Declaration of Principles of the Socialist Party which, while in itself (the Declaration) is very much confused and inconsistent on the whole question of power and the road to it, yet throws doubt on the reformist way. Hence Thomas' present position is a *departure from the Declaration and a concession to O Neal*.

The Hillquit amendment (if the version published in the *Socialist Call* is the correct one) contains a clause that seeks to empower the Congress of the United States "to establish and take over" all sorts of business enterprises "to be owned and operated by the government of the United States . . . for the benefit of the people, and generally for the social and economic welfare of the workers, farmers and consumers". What is this? It is supposed to provide a peaceful, a constitutional way to socialism, and is so interpreted by Thomas. But the Declaration of Principles said it was *doubtful* whether that can be done. The Declaration of Principles opened other and revolutionary possibilities. Thomas is here removing the doubt in the direction not of a clearer and more consistent revolutionary position but backwards—in the direction of the Right Wing, even though the latter may not be favoring the Thomas version of the Hillquit amendment.

All this we must point out to the membership of the Socialist Party, and to the workers generally, in order to help them reach the understanding that only Soviet Power, a Soviet Constitution, is the banner of liberation of the American masses. And this we must do in the struggle for the United Front which would also include a struggle for a constitutional amendment to take away from the Supreme Court the power to nullify legislation favorable to the masses and forced upon Congress by the militant struggles of the masses themselves.

Furthermore. We must point out to the masses that the analysis of the role of the "democratic institutions" of this country in the fascization of the rule of the American bourgeoisie, the analysis given by our Party, has been proven fully correct by all recent developments. As was stated in the *Outline to Communist Party Units on the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International* (*The Communist*, June, 1935).

"We must now take more note of the fact that thus far the process of fascization in this country (in its open forms as well as masked) avoids attacking 'ideologically' the principles of American democracy, even 'champions' these principles, especially the American

Constitution, *while curtailing systematically the democratic rights of the masses, especially the right to assemble, to organize and to strike.* The Liberty League parades as the best defender of the 'democratic institutions' of the United States. So do Hearst, Coughlin and Long. It is clear that the forces of fascization in the U.S., at least for the present, and until the revolutionary crisis becomes more mature, prefer to sail under the banner of 'democracy' and 'against dictatorship', *while daily trampling under foot the democratic rights of the masses and seeking to strengthen the dictatorship of finance capital.* The backward masses are liable to be deceived by this 'democratic' demagogy of the fascists and semi-fascists, failing to recognize their fascist character. It is, therefore, necessary to point out (a) that because of the traditions of bourgeois democracy in the U.S., fascist ideology in this country naturally abstains for a time from directly attacking these traditions, at the same time intensifying the drive of fascization to curtail the democratic rights of the masses in practice; (b) the Constitution and the 'democratic' institutions of this country are of such a nature, in distinction from some of the European institutions of bourgeois democracy, that finance capital is still in a position to concentrate in the hands of the President tremendous striking force for the purposes of fascization and war preparations, the putting over of the N.R.A. being the best of the most recent examples; that the Constitutional division of government functions (legislative, executive and judiciary) also enables finance capital to use any one of these arms of government for pressure upon the other and in this way promoting fascization without the need of changing the Constitution. The 'States rights' are also utilized to curtail the rights of the masses even by legislation without the need of modifying the Federal Constitution today. Some liberals, and also Norman Thomas, reach the conclusion that, as long as there is no change of the Constitution and no formal abolition of any of the 'democratic' institutions provided by the Constitution, there is no fascization of the methods of rule of the American bourgeoisie. This is false. Life itself demonstrates the growing fascization of the rule of the bourgeoisie in the U.S. as outlined above. Only this fascization still takes place *largely* within the framework of the Constitution itself and under the banner of 'democracy', which is explained by the special characteristics of the bourgeois democracy in the U.S., and which also confirms the Communist position that fascism grows organically out of bourgeois democracy itself. Therefore we say: *'Only the class struggle against the entire policy of the bourgeoisie can defend the interests of the masses and crush the plans of finance capital and fascism.'*"

Only in the light of this analysis can we fully understand how the American bourgeoisie expects to utilize the fight over the Constitution for the further fascization of its rule—and *to defeat these expectations.*

What is the central conclusion? To utilize to the fullest the new and broader opportunities for united front struggles and, on the basis of these, to win the masses for the revolutionary way out and for a Soviet America.

# Recent Political Developments and Some Problems of the United Front

By EARL BROWDER

*(Report to the Meeting of the Central Committee,  
C.P.U.S.A., May 25-27, 1935)*

**C**OMRADES: This report is not a general survey of our political tasks. I am taking up very briefly some current problems of the united front, with an introduction to register the typical features of the new developments since our January Plenum. The reason for this is clear. It is the same reason for which we placed the report of Comrade Stachel as the first and main report on the order of business at this meeting. The reason is that, although we can register some considerable political successes and a broad expansion of the political influence of our Party, we cannot say that to the same degree we are consolidating this influence among the masses, that to the same degree we are organizing them and securing guarantees for the continuance of this influence. This is the main question facing us. What I have to say, therefore, must be considered in the nature of a continuation of yesterday's discussion, connecting it with the main, new, political features and some current problems of the united front.

## MAIN DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE LAST PLENUM

First of all, we must very briefly give a characterization of the developments since the January Plenum. I have listed some seven fields in which we must take note of changes in the situation.

First, in the international arena we have in this period since January the extreme sharpening of the international antagonisms, expressed first of all in the March 16 announcement of Hitler fascism of its complete rearmament and reintroduction of conscription. This Hitler proclamation places imperialist war on the immediate order of the day. This determines the whole international situation. This is the key fact determining the development of the world today. Together with that, and of the same general signifi-

cance, is the Italian aggression against Ethiopia which is important, not only because it involves an imperialist attack upon one of the few remaining semi-independent small countries, not only because it is an imperialist aggression against a Negro State, but because of the special significance of the movement—the sign of removal of all restraints from imperialist appetites, the development of the whole atmosphere in the imperialist world that the time has come to grab what can be grabbed.

Of the same general significance is the renewed penetration of Japanese imperialism in Northern China, with the result of Japan's taking over of the Nanking regime, which formerly was the stronghold of American influence. Directly in connection with the loss of position in the Far East by American imperialism, we must also record the American naval maneuvers in the Pacific. Generally this phase of the world development is characterized by the armament race in which the whole imperialist world is rapidly speeding up.

As against these menacing factors in the international situation, we must register new and significant victories for the Soviet peace policy. The most important are the mutual assistance pacts entered into by the Soviet Union with France, Czechoslovakia and Rumania. These pacts bring the Soviet peace policy into very active influence upon the whole development of the world attack.

We have already analyzed the political significance of these pacts in the *Daily Worker*. We shall continue this analysis in the *Daily Worker* and in *The Communist*. We must emphasize here, I think, not a detailed examination of this point, because we cannot take time for it. Now we must emphasize the extreme importance of every *leading* Party member, if not every Party member, really understanding this, studying this question and making it understood by the broadest masses of the workers. It is precisely on this point, one of the greatest victories of the world proletariat, that the reformists, the social-fascists, the renegades, and particularly the Trotskyites, are making their most vicious attacks against the Soviet Union, the Communist International, and the Communist Party.

The isolation of the center of imperialist aggression in Europe—Hitler—constitutes an important victory for the world proletariat. This breaks the solidarity of the imperialist camp and establishes rallying points in every country for the mass urge for peace. Precisely this is hailed by the Trotskyites, the Socialist Party Old Guard, even Norman Thomas, as a defeat of the working class, as the surrender of the Soviet Union to the imperialists, as a betrayal by the Communist International of the revolutionary class struggle. And we must take advantage of precisely such questions further to



complete the isolation among the masses of such counter-revolutionary agents of capitalism, to meet them on these issues squarely among the masses. We need have no doubt that the masses will respond when we give them our clear explanation of these issues.

The third feature of the development of these past months is the victory of the united front, the progress of the united front, and its results in the various countries. Before all, this means, of course, in France, where the formal national pact between the Socialist Party and the Communist Party, their joint mobilization of the masses against the rising wave of French fascism, has reached significant victories. The municipal elections recently concluded in France, which increased the hold upon municipalities by both the Socialist and the Communist Parties, with the Communists making the largest gains, is the result of the success of the united front before the elections in giving serious check to the development of French fascism.

On a small scale, but of the same general significance, is the development of the united front in England with the I.L.P., which, in spite of the sabotage of the I.L.P. leaders and their efforts to move to the Right, is moving definitely towards the establishment of the united Communist Party in Britain.

#### PRESENT CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DEPRESSION OF A SPECIAL KIND

Fourth, we must say a few words about the economic trends of this immediate past period. The main feature has been the continued fluctuation of all the economic indices, up and down, without an established long-time trend, although now going down again. At the time of our last Central Committee meeting, we took note of an upward development of the industrial index in this country and in most of the countries of the capitalist world. Now again, the course of this economic index is downward, both in the United States and in most of the capitalist countries. The characteristic feature of these ups and downs in the capitalist world is that they take place within the limits of the low and high points of 1933, that is, emphasizing again concretely that characteristic of the depression of a special kind which has become well known from Stalin's analysis a year and a half ago.

A new feature of the present economic situation on a world scale is the approach to a new financial crisis. We are coming rapidly again to a period which we can compare with 1932 and the beginning of 1933, when the financial system cracked and when country after country went off the gold standard. A new financial crisis of equal, if not greater, magnitude, is rapidly maturing at this moment. For the United States this means also the stimulation of

the inflationary trends which are growing rapidly from the inner forces of capitalist decay in this country, but which probably will come to full expression under the blows of the international financial crisis. These inflationary trends in the United States already have demonstrated their overwhelming control of the House of Representatives and a majority of the Senate. It is only the executive power that staves off uncontrolled inflation in the United States at the present time.

The agrarian crisis, especially in the United States, has been sharply accentuated in this period both through the policies of the government, the A.A.A., the results of which are now known, and through the renewed drought and the soil erosion. The capitalist influence which has been degrading agriculture over a long period is now coming to a head as a result of the special circumstances of the crisis in the dust storms of the last weeks. This must be explained as a phenomenon of capitalism, not a natural phenomenon. That is exactly what they are. They are exactly of the same significance for America as the floods in China for that country. These disasters are the signs of the breaking down of man's established control of nature through the breaking down of the existing social, economic system.

We must add to this the crisis in the relief system, the general lowering in the living standards of the whole population that is accompanying the transfer of relief from the cash relief to work relief on the basis of the Roosevelt starvation scale.

#### THE STRUGGLE IN THE COLONIAL COUNTRIES

It is necessary to note further the deepening crisis in the colonial countries of the world. These last months have witnessed a sharp speeding up of the revolutionary struggle in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. This has not been merely the result of the rising wave of the revolutionary struggle of the masses, although that is basic, but has been enormously stimulated by the weakening effect upon the economy of the colonial countries exerted by the policies of imperialism. American imperialism, for example, which has been helping to try to stabilize the Nanking regime—Kuomintang, Chiang Kai-shek rule — in China, furnishing airplanes, bombs, aviators, military instructors, etc., has counterbalanced all of the aid they have given to the Nanking regime by carrying through a currency policy which has given a smashing blow to the Nanking regime. The bidding up of the price of silver simply has thrown all economic arrangements in China into the most complete confusion. In the United States this is one of the features of an inflation policy. But the effects on China, India and other countries on the silver standard

has had the most serious deflationary effects with extreme dropping of prices. The result has been to deny to the colonial world the stimulating effects of inflation, which the capitalists are applying to their own system.

In connection with this we must note the phenomenal successes of the Red Armies in China, and the successful shift of the base of Soviet power in China, from Kiangsi province to the province of Szechwan, a military and political movement which is without parallel in history. The successful carrying through of this tremendous maneuver has also served to shift relations of power in the Far East, and has been one of the main factors in relieving for the moment somewhat the danger of imperialist attack from the East on the Soviet Union.

In the colonial world, of great significance at this time were the events in Cuba—the general strike, the armed struggles that have taken place, the reactionary terror organized by the U.S. Ambassador, Jefferson Caffery, which is attempting to drown the Cuban revolution in blood. These events in Cuba must be understood not as a strengthening of reaction. They are signs of the cracking of the whole base of imperialist rule. The fact that the revolutionary forces in Cuba have suffered a momentary defeat must not lead us to understand that the revolution is now ebbing in Cuba. Quite the contrary. The defeat of the revolutionary forces in the past months is merely one of those stages in the preparation of victorious battles—the road to successful revolution has never been a course travelling from one victory to another, but has ever been, superficially considered, a series of “defeats” leading up to the final victory. In Cuba we must understand the events in that sense. Fundamentally, it is one of the stages of hammering out the iron forces of revolution which will successfully establish Soviet power in Cuba. At the moment in Cuba, however, we should call attention to the whole Party that the Communists have put forward the slogan of a People’s Revolutionary government, an anti-imperialist government. The Communists have proposed a united front with the Cuban Revolutionary Party and Young Cuba, the parties of Grau San Martin and of Guiteras who was assassinated by reaction a few weeks ago, to be established on the basis of anti-imperialist slogans, slogans of Cuba for Cubans. Does this mean that we are discarding the program of Soviet power in Cuba? Not at all. We have no guarantee that a people’s anti-imperialist government will actually come into existence. It may or it may not. But if it comes into existence, it will be an interim government leading towards a Soviet Cuba. We have published documents on this question. I mention them now, not to go into an elaborate discussion, but to emphasize

the importance for the American Party to understand thoroughly these questions, to know what is going on, because the Communist Party in the United States is taking an active part in developing the policy—our task as well as the task of the Communist Party of Cuba. In fact our Party has jointly initiated the negotiations, or attempted to establish negotiations, together with the Cuban Party, with the Grau San Martin forces.

#### THE GROWING MASS DISCONTENT WITH THE NEW DEAL

We now must take note of the shifts in bourgeois alignments and policies in the United States, and the signs of disintegration in the bourgeoisie, the splitting up and factionalism emphasizing bourgeois political instability.

Underlying all these developments is the growing discontent of the masses with Roosevelt, and the consequent failure of Roosevelt to carry through his move to the Right, and to consolidate the former Right opposition to the New Deal, as his base. This failure is demonstrated by the growing mass resentment against the New Deal, and by the general loss of prestige of the New Deal, and especially of Roosevelt personally.

At our last Plenum we noted a certain persistence of Roosevelt's personal popularity even in the days of the continued discrediting of his policies one after another; but today we must say that the personal popularity of Roosevelt is rapidly disappearing. It is against this that must be measured the growing fire from the Right against Roosevelt. The two are directly connected. From the Right we not only have the fire of the coalition of the Republicans and Democrats, which we examined at some length some months ago, but today we have the official spokesmen of the capitalists, the Chamber of Commerce, openly breaking with Roosevelt, followed by the Steel Trust.

The Roosevelt New Deal development more and more conforms to the general outlines of the development of the Bruening Government in Germany. We can draw a certain analogy between the position of Bruening and that of Roosevelt today. We have done that before for certain illustrative purposes. Roosevelt will attempt now again to orientate to the Left, to play up again the New Deal to these masses which have been following the various Third Party movement tendencies. It is not so easy, however, for Roosevelt at this stage to recreate the illusions about the New Deal, no matter how Left he makes his gestures. Today the sharp contrast between words and deeds is more dramatic than ever. Roosevelt may make a temporary truce with the leaders of the A. F. of L.—that is not so difficult. All that is necessary for that

is to promise Green another scapegoat, to save his face, and the appointment of one bureaucrat to a new position in the National Labor Relations Board. But that cannot by any means bring the official endorsement of the A. F. of L. bureaucracy for the Roosevelt wage scales, which are immediately announced thereafter, and which constitute such an outrageous attack against the living standards of all the masses in America that no single bureaucrat, no matter how reactionary he may be, dares to stand up and endorse that proposition. Roosevelt may make considerable advances in forcing into line the LaFollettes, Olsens, Sinclairs, but he cannot absorb into his base the millions of veterans to whom he has just again denied the bonus, in spite of an overwhelming vote in both Houses of Congress for it. Even those features of the New Deal in which there still cling certain shreds of illusions, such as the Wagner Bill, the rejuvenation of the N.R.A., etc., even on these issues we notice in New York that when they called a demonstration strike *for* the Wagner Bill and *for* the N.R.A., even in the capitalist daily press in preparing for this strike they could not feel sure that they would carry it through except by camouflaging the strike as a move *against* the Roosevelt policy on wages.

These things show the extreme contradictions and difficulties involved in the attempted reorientation now going on in the bourgeois camp.

Next we must speak of the changes taking place among the masses during this period. All of the things we have to speak about are continuations of what we examined at the January Plenum; they all confirm the decisions of the January Resolutions on the Labor Party, trade unions, etc. I do not need to go into a detailed examination of these matters, except to catalogue a few items illustrating the nature of this period and the speeding up of the radicalization of the masses.

#### THE GROWING CRISIS IN THE S.P.

We should note first, under this head, that the crisis in the Republican and Democratic Parties, about which we spoke in January, is spreading into all other camps that base themselves upon the bourgeoisie, upon capitalism, including in that category the Socialist Party, although that must be said with certain reservations. Within the S.P., there is a profound and growing crisis. We have dealt with this in the press, and I only want to add to what we have already published, some quotations from a letter of Norman Thomas which was sent last February to the leaders of the S.P. and which reached our hands a few days ago. I will read some sentences in which Thomas characterizes the crisis within the S.P.:

"It looks as if we had escaped or delayed a split only to fall a victim of paralysis. With a few shining exceptions practically everywhere the Party is losing, not gaining morale.

"Unfortunately, whether they were so intended or not, the actions of the extreme Right wing in New York have brought about widespread conviction that the Party is splitting, that it is futile, and that at any rate, it is an adjunct to Roosevelt, notably in what it has said about the security program.

"Already to an amazing extent, we have lost what I may call the cultural field to the Communists in spite of their appalling mistakes. We are rapidly losing in many parts of the country in the political field to Long, to Dr. Townsend, to Upton Sinclair, and God knows who else.

"Among other things, as Chairman of the Finance Committee, I find it is a virtual impossibility to raise money from friendly sources because of the general belief that we are dead or dying."

Of course, comrades, we would be making a big mistake if we would make the same conclusion as Thomas does, that the S.P. is dead and dying, and think we have only to sit back and watch it die. It is not so simple as Norman Thomas thinks.

This crisis also shows itself in all of the other Third Party groups and movements. Even Huey Long has his inner crisis, and, although we are not close enough to examine all the details of this, we can see that he is going through his ebbs and flows like the others and is having difficulties. The inner difficulties of Coughlin are manifest even though he has no organization to deal with. The Union for Social Justice, he says, is Father Coughlin, but he even has factions within himself reflected in a wavering and unsteady line of policy.

Within the Executive Council of the A. F. of L., this political crisis of capitalist groups also expresses itself in open threats of split. We should not underestimate the seriousness or deep-going character of this, as some of our comrades would. This threat of a new independent A. F. of L., voiced by John L. Lewis, some comrades have said, has no significance for us, because Lewis is as much of a reactionary as Green. Such reasoning is wrong. Of course Lewis is as much a reactionary as Green, but it is time for us to begin to learn that the more reactionary the camp, the more sharp become the contradictions as they begin to develop. In Europe, today, who would try to explain now that Germany and Italy are natural friends because both are extreme reactionary fascist countries? Precisely the extremity of the reactionary regime in each country has brought the relationship of Germany and Italy to perhaps the sharpest contradictions in recent history. So it is within the A. F. of L.

However, neither should we think that the threat of split in

the A. F. of L. is merely a struggle of reactionaries for dominant positions. It is much more important and deep-going than that. While it is a struggle of reactionaries among themselves, some are attempting to make use of the deep-going currents among the radicalized masses for their own reactionary needs. It is of no little significance that the main issue upon which John L. Lewis let loose his anonymous threat to split the A. F. of L. was the issue of industrial unionism. It is not an accident that very shortly after this, the first new industrial union charter was actually issued. As Comrade Stachel pointed out, for the first time in years John L. Lewis is making a public appearance in New York. Lewis is moving towards occupying the role of a "Left" leader in the American labor movement.

#### PRESENT EVIDENCES OF MASS RADICALIZATION

Among the features of mass radicalization, let us mention the successes of our campaign for H.R. 2827; the attainment of a favorable report on this bill by the Committee on Labor; the registration of a vote of 52 on the Congress floor for the Workers' Bill, and the unanimous adoption over the heads of the leaders by the Congress of unemployed organizations, led by the Socialist Party and other groups, of our resolutions on unity, even forcing them to withdraw their splitting resolution. The Harlem events of March 19 are of the most enormous significance in the struggle for Negro rights. The development of the strike movement, first of all in auto; the automobile strike, limited as it was and betrayed as it was in the end, was of the most tremendous significance. Highly significant are the developments on the Pacific Coast among the marine workers, the strikes there and the whole development in the marine industry throughout the country. So, too, are the lumber strikes that are taking place today. And when we speak of the strike movement, we must not underestimate the significance of the New York, one-hour, political strike, ostensibly serving to bolster up the New Deal, but in actuality cutting the very ground out from under the New Deal and expressing mass disillusionment with Roosevelt. Nor should we underestimate the significance of the student strike of April 12, unprecedented in history—a strike of 175,000 students. Let us bear in mind, too, the full meaning of the Writers' Congress that was held at the end of April; even the most reactionary literary journals in America had to register the fact that it was the Communists who organized the leading lights in American literature who came together to declare their fundamental adherence to the proletarian revolution.

We must mention among these signs of the times the movement

for a National Negro Congress, which was definitely launched in the recent conference in Howard University in Washington, with such immediate favorable response that even the reactionary Negro misleader, Kelley Miller, had to declare this is one issue on which he had to agree with the Communist, James Ford.

We must mention May Day and the developments of the united front in connection with it, a point which could very well serve for an hour's examination, by itself. Just to characterize a few of the symptoms of the May Day development—that the National Chairman of the Socialist Party speaks on May Day from the same platform as John Williamson, Cleveland Organizer of the Communist Party, in a formal united front. And this happened in many places, that leaders of the S.P. spoke on May Day together with Communists, and Socialist workers marched on May Day together with Communist workers.

During this period a whole series of developments demonstrated the possibilities of growth of the American League Against War and Fascism. While most of the work of developing the American League has been left in the hands of middle class and church elements, we must say they are not doing a bad job despite our neglect. The American League has been penetrating church organizations in America to an extent most of us do not dream of. Speaking of churches, we have to note that a large part of the success of the Youth Congress movement has been that it has gotten the religious organizations of the youth. We have learned that the youth of America are organized, most of them in religious organizations, and we are getting most of them in the Youth Congress; it moves from success to success, and the bigger it gets the stronger becomes the position of the Y.C.L. in it. It is the broadest united front we have ever seen in America.

Just to mention a few more of the most significant items expressing mass radicalization—the vote for Maurice Sugar in Detroit, the victory of the workers' ticket in Southern Illinois, the struggle in Gallup and the response to it by the workers and trade unions of New Mexico and other places. The development within the Farmer-Labor Party in Minnesota where we have a growing Left wing now, in which we have even a Communist nominated in one of the wards on the F.L.P. ticket.

#### BOURGEOIS THIRD PARTY MOVEMENTS

There is another feature of the crisis in the third Party movements, shown by the situation of the Epic and Utopian movements in California. The comrades have heard something of what is going on there, but what you probably do not know yet is that the majority



of the actives in the Sinclair Epic movement are for the united front with the Communists. Sinclair's recent convention was almost completely broken down by this issue. Sinclair only pulled through, despite the arbitrarily imposed machine rule, by making serious compromises. Motions passed at this convention were accepted by the Left wing as adoption by Sinclair of the principles of the united front; while the motions are so worded as to take out the whole meaning, the understanding of the convention was that the principles of the united front were adopted. We went into this convention with a few delegates and in the course of a few days we built up a group of 87, absorbing the Townsendites and the Long group, which is trying to penetrate the Epic movement, and the Farmer-Labor Party group which had been organized by Shoemaker of Minnesota—all of the opposition elements were consolidated in our group and accepted our program before the end of the Convention. The issue became clear-cut between two groups—Sinclair with the reactionaries and the Communists with the growing Left wing.

One last word on these features. We should not underestimate the importance of the speech of Coughlin in New York last Wednesday in which he found it politically expedient to go outside of his prepared speech to make a threat against the capitalist system. He threatened, of course, to use only constitutional means to abolish capitalism, that is true, but what is important for us is that Father Coughlin, staunch defender of capitalism, whose every speech since he became a public figure has been permeated through and through with the fighting spirit to defend the capitalist system, finds it necessary, in order to continue his role and keep his followers, to issue a threat that under certain conditions capitalism may have to be abolished. This is a concession to the necessity created by anti-capitalist sentiment among his followers and the realization that he cannot possibly continue his mass influence without speaking along these lines.

#### OUR EXPERIENCES IN PROMOTING THE UNITED FRONT

We have noted what has happened since January. Now what have we learned since last January, particularly what have we learned about the united front? We have lots of experience in this period, economic struggles, strike struggles, the inner life of the trade unions, the unemployment movement, the inner experiences in the Socialist Party, and the sharp divisions that are taking place within the S.P. Especially have we learned a lot from the spontaneous mass upsurge within the S.P. on the question of the Lang articles in the Hearst press. We have the development of the Labor Party movement, top and bottom. At the top, the revelation of the confusions and hesitations of the Congressional leaders as shown in the Wash-

ington conference a couple of weeks ago. We have the developments of the Negro movement, especially in Harlem. Without going into any more examination of the details of these experiences, let us summarize and see what conclusions we can draw from all this.

What can we say about our united front efforts since January? First, the conclusion that I think we can all agree to, that in every case where we organized and prepared the correct approach to the masses and to the lower ranks of the leaders in the reformist organizations, serious advances in the united front have been made. In every case, without exception! And this includes not only the lower functionaries, but also in some cases the higher functionaries. It includes such developments as the steel union, where we swung into the united front every considerable leader of the union outside of the Executive Council, and even split the Executive Council by one man. It includes the unemployed organizations, where we made serious united front developments, including practically the whole cadre of leadership directly connected with the mass organizations. It includes the S.P., where we have many local organized united front efforts, including even individual members of the N.E.C., like Powers Hapgood in Massachusetts. And certainly in the Negro field has there been penetration by the united front idea of many in the top leadership of these organizations, resulting in joint actions.

This is the first conclusion from our experiences. But we must immediately follow it with another conclusion, that *these advances are not general*. They do not take place everywhere throughout the country, but on the contrary they are still the exception.

Which leads us to the third conclusion—that the advances of the united front are so spotty because our work is spotty, and that where the united front has not advanced it has been our fault, the fault of our work—work badly prepared, badly conceived, clumsy.

We must say now that the limitations on the development of the united front are self-imposed, limitations that we put upon ourselves, by our inability to work correctly, our wrong approach to the workers and their lower leaders, and by our lack of confidence in them—that they will respond. Sometimes there is even a refusal to approach these workers on the grounds that we know beforehand that they will not respond.

What is this obstacle?

#### ROOT OUT THE REMNANTS OF SECTARIANISM

It is sectarianism, a sectarian distrust of the masses, even fear of the masses. It is a lack of differentiation between the masses and the leaders. It is the tendency to lump all leaders into one reactionary mass, not to distinguish between the local and national, or

between the political tendencies of these leaders. It is the failure to differentiate between the various political groupings that are being formed within these organizations. In short, it is sectarianism.

Yesterday in our discussions, several comrades pointed out that we no longer have to talk about whether we have made the turn to mass work or not, or have begun to make the turn, or are beginning to begin to make the turn. We have made the turn. That is correct. We have placed the Party on the road to mass work. We have broken the paralysis of sectarianism. We have broken through the shell that kept us in one place and now we are moving. But the shell of sectarianism, although broken, is still in fragments sticking to our backs. We are moving, although carrying that shell, broken as it is, on our back. It is still a barrier between us and the masses. We have to clear out the remnants of the shell of sectarianism, get it off the back of the Party. That is the task now.

What does it mean concretely? It means we must make a drive in the Party for the united front. We must convince the Party that our united front policy is correct and practical. We must mobilize the Party to carry out this policy, which the Party is not doing yet as a whole. That is the task.

Some comrades might think that this Plenum of the Central Committee is turning all of our energy inward, talking about our inner organizational problems; that even when we come to the united front we speak of the necessity of the campaign inside the Party, and this at a period of the broadest mass movement. But why and how are we turning our attention inward at this moment? Precisely for the purpose of overcoming the inward sectarian tendency, and to throw all our energy to the outside among the masses. Everything we say about our inner problems has that one driving force behind it, really to orientate the whole Party toward mass work. We have learned that we cannot do that merely by the example of the good features of our work. We still have some hard sectarian shell places sticking out, and we have to tackle each one of these pieces and break it off.

We have to re-examine all of our work everywhere throughout the Party. Just as an example, we had a very interesting afternoon's discussion the other day with the Jewish Bureau. Now, the Jewish Bureau is certainly not the most backward language bureau of the Party. If there is one of our language bureaus that keeps abreast of the whole Party policy, it is the Jewish Bureau. Yet when we listened to the criticism of the comrades of the Jewish Bureau, the way they characterize their own work, it was an astonishing citation of evidence of the continuance of our sectarian habits. I am sure that this applies not only to the Jewish Bureau, but to most of the language bureaus.

And if it applies to these language bureaus it also applies to the elected Party committees, even though not in the same degree. The language bureaus have been singled out for some special criticism, and that is necessary. The language comrades should not think some special attack is being organized against them because of that. We know that the comrades in language work are good, loyal comrades, but we know also the conditions under which they work makes it necessary for the Party to give them a jolt and force them to get a new and fresh approach to all of our problems.

The same thing applies to the elected committees of the Party. We find even some of our best Districts carry on a lot of the old bad methods of work which are especially bad in the united front work. We get used to these bad methods, but the moment we bump up against some Socialists in the united front—and they are very keen, some of them, even though you might not believe it from the policies developed by their party—they can often pick out our weak spots much more quickly than we can.

What is our attitude when we come in contact with such Socialists? We too often wave aside their criticism. But we should have an entirely different attitude. We should be very responsive. We should say: "Thank you for pointing out our weakness; we will immediately try to overcome it. We will return the compliment and help you overcome your weaknesses." We can develop the most comradely relations on the basis of the most penetrating criticism if we have the correct approach. Too often our comrades still react against criticism from outside the Party. It is only within the closest Party ranks that we admit criticism. If a non-Party person criticizes us, he is looked upon as an enemy. Even those who have an enemy idea in their heads are not always enemies. When we get that idea out of their heads, they become our friends. This we don't always understand yet in practice. That is why we have not enough of a close friendly approach to the people in the united front. That is why often we will have a temporary united front which, instead of leading to a further growth, breaks up after one action. We curse those fellows and say that this shows they did not mean business, that they were not sincere. And that is many times very true of the leaders.

What we have to do is to create the conditions where it is impossible for the leaders to split the united front and take anybody with them. Can it be done? The youth are showing us how. Every attempt to split the Youth Congress has been disastrous for the ones that tried to do it. How is it that the youth are making greater successes than the Party with one-fourth the strength of the Party?

They make twice or three times the advances in the united front that the Party generally does. It is not that these youths are geniuses. It is not that they are so much smarter than we are. It is that even though they do not know as much as we do about how to work, they haven't got the old bad habits of work, so they more quickly adjust themselves to the tasks of the united front. But we older comrades think we know how everything should be done. That is one reason why we don't get as much done in the united front as we should.

These may be petty things. But it is these petty things that are today the main obstacles to the united front. Unless we learn to clear them away we shall not move forward. Now we have got to make a drive really to educate the Party on these little things, which are really big things, because behind these questions and their solution is the conception of the united front as the building of class unity. It is because we lose sight of the big thing—class unity—that we allow these little things to develop and become such important obstacles.

#### THE NEXT STEPS IN THE STRUGGLE FOR THE UNITED FRONT

What are the next steps for the united front? It is clear that the main fields for the struggle for unity remain the trade union and unemployed organizations, of strike struggles and economic struggles generally. The next big fight is around the slogan for the Labor Party, extending the united front into the political struggles of the masses and breaking them away from the capitalist parties. We have little that is new to say at this Plenum on the question.

At this moment we must give the most emphasis to a concentrated drive to win the Socialist Party members to the united front, to bring the Socialist Party officially into a general united front. This is important far beyond the numerical strength of the Socialist Party. It would be a serious mistake on our part to think, because in France the Socialist Party is 20 times larger than the S.P. in the United States, that therefore the importance of the united front with the S.P. here is only five per cent of what it is in France. That would be a very mechanical gradation of the importance of political developments. A successful united front with the S.P. in America—what would it mean in our fight for trade union unity. Would it mean merely adding together the total of our members with the S.P. members? No, a successful united front between these two parties would mean in the struggle for trade union unity a multiplication of our striking power by five or ten times.

Just look at what is happening in France. Before the achieve-

ment of the united front in France, there were defeat and retreat in the ranks of the working class. Fascism was advancing, bold and menacing. With the establishment of the united front and some successful mass actions, it changed the whole situation of the working class, and fascism was checked. In the trade union movement in the U.S. on a smaller scale but still of equal significance, the greatest immediate development would be through a successful united front with the S.P.

The same thing would be true in the unemployment field. If we could once get a united front established with the Socialist Party as they have it in France, we could force the carrying through of unification of all unemployment organizations, and such unified unemployed organizations would certainly be under a Left-wing hegemony.

What would it mean for the Labor Party development? It is clear that if we break through with the S.P., we will hasten the development of a Labor Party manifold.

What reason have we to think that we can successfully carry through such a campaign to take the S.P. into the united front? Well, the experiences since January have made it clear that among all the enemies of the united front, their weakest point is the Socialist Party. We have completely underestimated our potential allies in the S.P. We have been the victims of the idea of spontaneity in this respect. We think we have no allies there because they don't spontaneously come forward and stand by us. But we have not understood our role in leading these elements in the S.P. If we attempted to reach these friendly elements, we would have immediate results. But we don't even speak with them. We still have in our heads the idea expressed in our song books. When we were singing that song "On the Picket Line", the most popular song of our whole movement, there was that line: "If you don't like thugs and Socialists and scabs, come picket on the picket line." We have stopped singing that line of the song and cut it out of the book, but it still has too much influence in our minds. We still think too often that there is something shameful in associating with Socialists.

It is also wrong if we try to explain away all these things about our past. We should speak very openly and frankly. We don't have to say that we are 100 per cent pure people and that we never have made mistakes. Let us talk about those things and admit that they were damned foolishness. Let us admit that we sang foolish songs about the Socialists, that it was a bad mistake, and that we cut it out. We can talk with these Socialist workers about the most far-reaching questions when once we sweep out of the way these little, petty obstacles.

QUICK RESPONSE TO THE NEW CAMPAIGN OF DEMAGOGY  
MUST BE OUR WATCHWORD

We must have a broad agitation campaign, not only in our Party, but for the masses, to clarify new angles of some of the problems that are coming forward now. For example, there is now, with the shake-up in the bourgeois camp, a new form of the lesser evil theory. What does the A. F. of L. bureaucracy say now about the N.R.A. and so on? They don't defend it as they used to. They say, yes, they are bad, these codes, but if we sweep them all away there would just be chaos and slashing away of living standards. This is a new form of the lesser evil idea. There is also a new way of attack against the Communists, that is, an old way with fresh application. They say, for instance, that against the Wagner Bill there is a united front of the trusts and banks and Communists, that we Communists are making a united front with the extreme reactionary camp, whereas the A. F. of L. leadership stands with the liberal camp. This is nothing new. This is how the old Social-Democracy in Germany prepared the way for Hitler. We must react to these questions as the key problem in the building of the united front. Every such attack, every such question is calculated to obscure the main political question, which is the question of the united front against the capitalist attack today. Quick response, quick answer to every such question, is necessary in order to consolidate our united front efforts. The issues of the united front of immediate struggle, these are the center of the whole problem, these expose most quickly and fully the policies of surrender to the Roosevelt attacks upon the living standards of the masses.

It is clear what these issues are. Fight against the \$19 per month wage scale, for trade union unity, against the Wagner Bill and the N.R.A. The fight for H.R. 2827 is an outstanding slogan. The fight for Negro rights is becoming an increasingly powerful slogan, not only among the Negro masses, but also among the white workers. *For a Class Labor Party!* is a strong slogan; with that the slogan: *Against War and Fascism!* And let us not underestimate the significance in united front work of the slogan, *For Defense of the U.S.S.R.!* Perhaps we have thought that this slogan is not so popular among the broadest masses, that it is only for real 100 per cent Communists or those who are ready to join the Party. The developments in the Socialist Party on the Lang issue should make it clear to us how popular this slogan actually is. It is one of the broadest mass slogans that we have.

Finally, we must raise most sharply the issue (not new in principle, but one we have neglected), the fight against the sales tax

and against the high cost of living. There is probably nothing in America which arouses such universal opposition sentiment, anger, and hate, as this damned sales tax. Even more than the high cost of living generally—the rise in prices which is the real problem for the masses, of which the sales tax is a small part—strangely enough the American masses just hate taxes on goods. An extra penny in tax causes more resentment and hate than a ten cent overcharge that was not expressed as a tax.

I don't know how many of you appreciate fully the full meaning of the hatred borne by the American masses against taxes. But I know out in Kansas among all the poor backward farmers, they are ready to do almost anything to smash a sales tax. They would make a revolution for that one purpose, if they knew how. Lem Harris, a good American, will bear me out on this. We don't take this issue of the sales tax seriously enough. There has been some attempt made. Cleveland has done something about it. There have been some examples of local campaigns, but no general assault down the line on the issue that we could get the broadest mass support than on any other single issue. In Illinois the whole political situation is tied up in a crisis in the fight over the sales tax. It is not easy for the Illinois legislature to stand out against the pressure of the National Government and the main capitalist circles, who threaten to starve the millions on relief, to force the addition of one per cent to the sales tax, and yet they continue to vote it down. This should give an idea of the mass pressure against the sales tax.

Just a word about the question of the importance in united front of quick response to issues. If there is one reason, more than any other single reason, for the effectiveness of the Lang campaign, it was our quick response to the question. We caught these Socialist leaders before they had time to agree upon a common line, on how to defend themselves. We broke up their unity. Confusion reigned among them for a few days and the masses had time to get into action. But if we had been slow, the Lang question would never have become a real mass question. We didn't organize that movement, it was, more or less, spontaneous, but we demoralized the Old Guard, thus giving the masses a change to express themselves.

Why do I speak about the necessity for quick response, for more sensitivity? We generally accept that. But you know there have been signs that our concentration program is being interpreted in some places, as meaning that when some new event comes up that is not in our planned work, we just ignore it, thinking that otherwise we would be allowing events of the day to draw us away from our concentration work. So we make a virtue of failing to respond to new issues of the day. And because we do that, our concentration



work becomes mechanical and sterile and brings no results. Concentration work means that every new issue that comes up shall be immediately seized and carried into our concentration work. Concentration work without that daily, living contact of every new issue is not concentration work, it is bureaucratism.

Let me give a little example of failure to respond, a failure of sensitivity, for which perhaps there will be a hundred explanations brought forward to show how natural it was, etc., but for which there is really no explanation at all. I have in mind our complete failure to get meetings for Bob Minor in the concentration districts on his way back from New Mexico. How can we explain such a thing? We sent out proposals to selected Districts—Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, etc. And in every case we failed; some immediately responded that it was impossible and others told us at the last minute that pressure of more important work made it impossible to organize a meeting for Bob Minor on Gallup.

How is such a thing possible? How can a Minor meeting on Gallup interfere with your concentration work? What is more important than your work in the A. F. of L., and what better way can you find to gather new strength in the A. F. of L. than by bringing forward such an issue as the Gallup case? Some ignore the fact that A. F. of L. members are involved in the Gallup frame-up. Some comrades think it is merely an I.L.D. question. And the comrades don't give serious attention to the I.L.D., unfortunately. We need the I.L.D. very much. It is one of our mass organizations of serious import. We won't talk about it here today.

But here was Gallup, and the fight for ten miners, members of the U.M.W.A., their defense dramatized on a national scale, with the kidnaping and beating of Minor and Levinson, which took the front page in every newspaper in America. In the East, in the South, in Chicago and Cleveland, clear to the Pacific Coast, to San Francisco and Seattle, every paper in this country had Bob Minor and Levinson on the front page. And yet, with all of this two million dollars' worth of advertising presented to our Districts, free, absolutely free, (we didn't even ask for the expenses of Comrade Minor's traveling), the comrades said, "We are sorry, you are asking too great a sacrifice from us on this". Perhaps if it were just this one question it wouldn't be worthwhile getting excited about. But what will happen to all other issues and opportunities if we could miss this one in such a cheerful manner?

And along with this is the question of the bonus. What are we doing on the bonus issue? Well, we are trying to do a little bit in the *Daily Worker*, but we have terrible obstacles to get any kind of action in the Districts on the bonus question. Of course, this is

only an issue that effects two million people directly, and which only involved the problem of whether the veterans as a body will be swung into the fascist camp, or be neutralized and brought over to the workers' side! Only that! Yet, we seem in many Districts to have in practice, although we would never defend it in theory, the attitude of the *Socialist Call* on this question.

#### SOME POINTS ON THE STRUGGLE FOR THE LABOR PARTY

We shall not underestimate the enormous increase in the fascist danger in America, precisely because we have neglected the bonus issue and did not identify the fight enough with the trade unions and with the Left development of the masses. The fascists made excellent use of it. Every fascist group, every fascist leader and aspirant to fascist leadership, has capitalized this issue.

Concretely, can we propose any new measures of an organizational character, to realize these many questions that we have spoken about?

We have one or two new suggestions. We propose, for example, that in the struggle for the Labor Party we shall attempt to initiate committees for the Labor Party. We shall try as soon as possible to help establish a national trade union committee—a national committee for a Labor Party.

We propose that similar committees be set up everywhere on a local scale. These committees shall be organized as quickly as possible, provided that they are well organized. We do not want quickly established paper committees which have no real existence. We do not want the miscellaneous scrambling together of a few names with no particular significance. We do not want committees composed only of these already close to us. That is no use to us, in fact it will be an obstacle. We want committees that will represent the broadening of the Labor Party movement so that we will be a minority in it—a considerable minority. We don't want a Party majority on anything in this.

These committees should become the centers of active agitation and propaganda for a Labor Party to furnish outside stimulus to the task of getting local unions of the A. F. of L. on record for a Labor Party. It could be argued that such committees be brought together only on a representative basis of those elected from trade unions. But, in my opinion, this would delay progress. We need to get these unions on record for a Labor Party and get them to elect representatives. We need something to speed up this progress because, in spite of the sentiment for it, nothing is being done to organize it. Organizational work must be begun.

Another concrete question is the plan for the National Negro Congress. This is a beginning, it seems, to a real broad united-front

approach to the Negro liberation struggle. I will not go into details, but I want to call upon the leading cadres to have their eyes open, to read every directive sent out, to read the articles which will be published by Comrade Ford, and to guide yourselves accordingly. The next big step in the struggle for Negro rights will be the National Negro Congress.

Then we propose a new approach to the Socialist Party. We propose that this Plenum shall authorize a new letter to the N.E.C. of the S.P., again raising the questions of united front. We propose that on the basis of this letter, we shall in every locality again send letters to the local S.P.—a new organized drive. The principles on which this letter shall be constructed will be along the line I have indicated in this discussion. Already we can concretize a few simple directives for the letter which the P.B. will write in a few days. The Party locally should concretize this, taking the line of the national letter and taking up issues of local concern. We want to break through to the rank and file of the S.P., to carry through to the lower cadres, as well as the higher cadres.

We want to build a strong Left-wing in the Socialist Party and influence its development. We don't want to draw out from the S.P. individuals and small groups. It is of no particular use to us that individuals leave the S.P., even if they announce they are going to enter the C.P. This tends to demoralize the struggle inside the Socialist Party. It tends to create the suspicion that we are interested only in breaking up the S.P. Comrades, the most serious help we can get out of the S.P. is not in these individuals, but in the united front for which they could be of service if they remain within the S.P. There is still a tendency among Socialists to think that the united front is only a maneuver for the purpose of creating demoralization in their ranks, and individual or small group resignations help to support this idea. Those drawn out of the S.P. are not the basic workers who we want with us. Those basic elements we will have to take in great big chunks. We can get them through success of the united front. We want to tie up the Socialist locals in united front pacts with the beginning of struggle, to tie them up with the Labor Party, the Negro Congress, the American League Against War and Fascism, into our defense committees like Gallup, and the I.L.D. cases, Scottsboro, Herndon, etc.

The united front, against the capitalist attacks, is the key question of the day. For the quickest advance in the trade unions, the unemployed organizations, the building of a Labor Party, we must at this moment organize a concerted, energetic campaign to win to the united front the basic membership, and as many of the leaders as possible, of the Socialist Party.

# Organizational Problems of the Party

(Abridged Report to the Meeting of the Central Committee,  
C.P.U.S.A., May 25-27, 1935)

By JACK STACHEL

"In order to get the Party now firmly rooted among the decisive elements of the American workers, it must in all seriousness carry out the concentration on special factories, districts and sections. The center of gravity of Party work must be shifted to the development of the lower organizations, the factory nuclei, local organizations and street nuclei. . . .

"Unless we tenaciously concentrate our work on the most important industrial centers, we cannot build up a stable Party and revolutionary trade union movement, capable of resisting all blows and persecutions by the bourgeoisie. . . ."

**I**T is with this line in mind, established in the *Open Letter*, that we must now go to the examination of our work.

The total membership is at present very close to 31,000. This, of course, is progress in comparison with the figure at the time of the *Open Letter*, i.e., 15,000. But if we bear in mind the membership at the time of the Eighth Convention, then we must say that the rate of growth has not increased sufficiently in the face of the general progress of the Party.

But it is not enough to say 31,000 members. What kind of members? Where are they? What are they capable of doing even if they are working? Where are they working? These are decisive questions.

## IN THE BASIC INDUSTRIES

The *Open Letter* spoke especially about our work among the steel workers, miners, railroad workers, auto workers and textile workers. Out of a partial registration covering 27,000 members we record 700 steel workers, 1,250 metal workers, 1,073 miners, 550 auto workers, 365 textile workers, 406 marine workers, and 324 railroad workers. The 4,668 in this category, out of a membership of about 27,000, is approximately one-sixth. It is interesting to

compare the recruiting in the last three months. The comparison shows recruiting results in the following categories: 123 steel workers, 208 metal workers, 179 miners, 100 auto workers, 254 marine workers, 65 textile workers, and 87 railroad workers—a total of 1,016, or one-fifth of the total recruitment, which is a slight improvement. As to the other workers in basic industries, we have 23 oil workers, 74 chemical workers, 162 transport workers (outside of marine and railroad), 281 teamsters, 222 lumber workers, 87 packinghouse workers, 23 agricultural workers, and 444 mechanics—a total of 6,414 only.

In the lighter industries, the industrial workers total 7,173, a figure larger than in the basic industries, and divided as follows: 2,177 needle workers, 2,423 building workers (many of whom are engaged in trades that are considered basic and very important), 289 shoe workers, 1,373 food workers, 223 furniture workers, 206 laundry workers, 268 painters, and 114 sign-painters.

Among the non-proletarian and white collar workers, we have a total of 5,195, out of which there are 1,061 office workers, 425 teachers, 233 artists, 450 sales clerks, 408 store-keepers, and 2,516 working-class housewives. Another category is 1,200 farmers. There are 5,000 still unclassified.

With regard to unionization, we shall return to this later; but the registration shows 9,800 Party members in trade unions—4,370 in the A. F. of L., and 5,430 in the independent unions (2,327 in former T.U.U.L. unions and the rest in independent unions). At the time of the Eighth Convention we had 4,998 in trade unions—1,431 in the A. F. of L. and 3,567 in independent and T.U.U.L. unions.

This figure, of course, at present is not the same as during the registration. Many of those in former T.U.U.L. unions are now in the A. F. of L. If we take the recent recruitment in that connection, we have the following: in the first three months of the year the number of recruited trade unionists was larger—835 from the A. F. of L. and 614 from other unions, making a total of about 1,500 out of 5,300 registered in the three-months' recruitment, which is a smaller figure than the total in the Party. This is explained by two facts: first, it is true that the working class generally is not yet in the trade unions to the same extent as are the workers in the Party and many of the workers we educate and bring into the trade unions. But, more than that, it shows that we do not yet recruit according to the *Open Letter*, i.e., among the most advanced sections of the workers in the most important industries and trade unions. If we did, we would recruit many more than 835 A. F. of L. members.

INCREASE IN NATIVE AND NEGRO RATIO

With regard to other important facts of the Party composition, the registration shows 20,553 men and 6,262 women, of whom 2,683 are housewives. The balance includes, in addition to the working-class industrial women, many office workers and teachers. In this respect we have not yet made a real change; the number is still relatively small.

On the Negro composition, there are 2,227 Negro workers, or less than 10 per cent of the membership, excluding District 17, which has 90 per cent Negroes, and would add quite a few hundred, bringing the total to about 11 per cent. But still the figure is small. *In the recent recruitment, however, we show some improvement—there are 792 Negroes out of a total of 5,300.*

With regard to the question of native and foreign-born, the registration shows 11,298 native and 17,570 foreign born, or 40 and 60 per cent respectively. This is important and shows the trend, as the *Open Letter* emphasized, not merely concentration on industrial workers, but also among the native proletariat. *In the last three months' recruitment we have 3,014 native and 2,242 foreign-born.*

With regard to age composition, here the figures show the following:

25 years and under .....	2204
25-30 .....	4892
30-35 .....	4277
35-40 .....	4805
40-45 .....	3867
45-50 .....	3774
50 and over .....	2665

A total of 11,373 are under 35; 15,000, or the majority, are 35 and over. This, of course, does not take into account the fact that many thousands of young workers have been recruited in the last period to the Young Communist League.

The Party composition also shows some figures with regard to the education of the Party membership. It shows 4,669 who registered in January attended the Workers' Schools throughout the country, 2,788 in New York. Section training schools saw an attendance of 1,800—880 of these being in New York; 561 attended District training schools, 226 in New York; 155 attended the National training schools, with 54 from New York.

One of the most important figures is on the question of the employed and unemployed. In this we have made progress in the last period. The figures show 11,633 employed and 12,551 still

unemployed. In the last three months' recruitment, however, only 1,669 are employed and 2,719 unemployed.

#### STATUS OF SHOP NUCLEI

Now as to the status of the Party organizations. Here, to begin with, we have an increase from the time of the Eighth Convention from 187 to 252 sections. Shop nuclei figures show the following: *before the Open Letter there were 140; at the time of the last convention we had 328. Today the figures are incomplete, but show between 480 and 500.* In street nuclei there is an increase from 1,482 to 1,650. Let us see how the concentration districts fare. New York—an increase from 90 to 183 (now the number is over 200), Pittsburgh—22 to 25; Cleveland—18 to 32, an important increase; Detroit—14 to 18; Chicago—37 to 56. In these five districts—an increase from 161 to 341, or over 100 per cent. How many Party members are in the nuclei? Here our figures are approximate, due to lack of complete data. In New York, for example, there are 183 nuclei with 1,286 (now over 1,500) Party members, or an average of 7. Even in New York they are employed in factories with 127,000, or an average of 700 workers in a factory, although a large number are in the needle, food, and other industries. This means that even in New York we have a large number in plants of 200 and over.

On the basis of the figures that we have from Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago and other districts, we estimate, approximately, that there is an average of eight Party members in the shop nuclei throughout the country, *i.e.*, 3,500 to 4,000 Party members are organized in the basic units of the Party, the factory nuclei, while the overwhelming majority, over 23,000 to 24,000 members, are still in street nuclei. This shows that we have made some progress but have not settled the question decisively.

#### BUILD MORE SHOP NUCLEI

And this brings us to the main question before us. Of course, even today there are thousands of Party members that can be organized into factory nuclei. The figure of 3,500 to 4,000 does not include all those who work in big shops, two or three or more comrades in a factory. At least 1,500 Party members work in shops today where nuclei can be organized with little effort. What can we say in this respect? *Although we have made progress, we can't say that it is really a full concentration and orientation to the building of factory nuclei.* We can give some examples of that.

In examining the street nuclei we found a few instances where Party members worked in large plants of 100 to 200 workers, in

metal plants, and nobody ever thought of organizing nuclei there. When this question was raised in the nucleus, they were wondering why they had never thought of it. This shows that the pressure of immediate tasks, carrying through of immediate campaigns, weighs so heavily on us, that we very often forget the main task—where we have to work. That shows the necessity of constant struggle for the line of the Party also on the question of organization.

Furthermore, there are thousands of factories where we have not made the first contacts although we could make many through language groups, through the *Daily Worker*, through the I.W.O., through every organization, which we must begin to think about. This we must do.

But let us discuss the work of the nuclei which we already have. These 500 nuclei, those hundred or more nuclei in the factories of 2,000 or more workers—this is the important immediate job for us. If we solve this question it will not only solve many basic questions of the Party but it will also further stimulate shop organization and all our other work. And here I think we can also speak a little bit about reorientation. Let us ask, for example, do we plan our work in some of our best districts in a manner which fits in with this basic policy of the *Open Letter*—concentration on the basic industries, important factories and trade unions, and especially on the large factories where we already have Party organization?

#### MAIN ATTENTION ON CONCENTRATION POINTS

I think we can take the best district of the Party in respect to factory work, the Cleveland district in the recent period. We can ask the comrades to tell us: when we plan any given campaign of the Party among the masses in Cleveland, do we plan to bring it in the first place to the Fisher Body plant, with 9,000 workers of all strata, the majority of them native born? We could certainly ask the same question of the comrades in Detroit. Do we plan our campaigns so as to bring them in the first place to the Ford workers? Why don't we do that? Because we say: well, this is a luxury, so to speak, to build a factory nucleus, when we have to spread the *Daily Worker*, to carry on the Thaelmann campaign, the Scottsboro campaign or an election campaign. We want results right away. If we concentrate so much on that we won't get results right away. Furthermore, many district organizers have told us that the Party has a lot of campaigns and, they say, we can't carry them all out. Of course, we have not been able to work out a formula for carrying on many campaigns simultaneously and successfully. We don't make the issues of these campaigns. The class struggle makes them. They say you have Scottsboro, Herndon, Thaelmann, you have Gal-



up, so many local strikes, thousands of campaigns and money raising. Of course, we must learn how to concentrate, how to plan, how to combine. But if we really had a Party of tens of thousand organized in the main factories that employ millions of workers, with nuclei that stand on their feet and work and have access to the workers—then if we said Scottsboro, that would not be such a difficult campaign. When the organization is active and has contact with the workers, then, at one meeting, money can be raised and sent in. That is what is being done by the Socialist Party in many instances. If Bill Green wants to do something, he can send down a letter to the locals and get action on it.

So these questions also will be solved if we will not be thrown off the main line against which the *Open Letter* warns.

While giving leadership to every struggle of the masses we must continue to give the main attention to the selected concentration points because there will be the decisive struggle, and there in the first place we must win the workers. We must raise these questions with the whole Party much more forcefully than we have until now.

#### HOW THE NUCLEI WORK

Now we will examine the work of seven shop nuclei and seven street nuclei, the result of a study of these units by a commission of the C.C. We set out frankly to prove something, to prove that the shop nuclei are better than the street nuclei. We all know that. It is no secret. Facts prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the shop nuclei are far superior in every respect to the street nuclei. We in the Central Committee don't need that proof, *but we need it for the Party as a whole. We must popularize these facts.*

I want to summarize some conclusions from the investigation of these seven shop nuclei. They had one hundred and fifty-nine members out of 100,000 workers in the respective factories. Forty-two were recruited in six months by the 159, or about 25 per cent. Four were dropped in the last six months, exclusive of Baltimore where the figures of those dropped cover the last four years. The average attendance is 60 per cent; only five were reported recruited individually in the factories. The number of union members is 96 out of 159—83 of whom are in the A. F. of L.; 28 Y.C.L. members in these shops; 54 native-born white and 5 Negroes—the rest foreign-born. All seven issue shop papers regularly but Baltimore had three issues in the last year. With regard to activity in the shop, most of them carry on some propaganda. Only certain of these have arrived at the stage of reaching the workers inside the shop directly. In regard to the *Daily Worker*—101 read the *Daily Worker*, 51

read the *Party Organizer* and 41 *The Communist*. All have bureaus. Very little literature is sold in the plants or even in the nucleus. *One important point is that in most cases the sections help. In every case either a District representative or Section organizer works with these nuclei.*

#### COMPARISON WITH STREET NUCLEI

Now, some conclusions from the examination of the street nuclei and a comparison. The seven street nuclei showed a membership of 157; 41 recruited in the last six months, this being about the same percentage as in the shop nuclei. We count only those recruited from the territory—we don't count those transferred in. Here comes an important point—23 dropped out while 41 were recruited, more than half. The attendance at the units is the same—60 per cent.

With regard to the *Daily* sales, etc., of course the street nuclei have certain advantages because they don't have the same difficulties as they do inside the shop. I want to give a few facts regarding one of the good nuclei. The nucleus had 22 members in January and recruited 12 since then out of which they dropped three—only one of these has really dropped out, the other two are still hanging balance because they developed opposition in the German club. Sixteen work in factories, six belong to the A. F. of L. union, four are non-union. Sixteen belong to the Natur Freunde, a German nature friends organization, and some to the I.L.D. There is no unemployed organization in the territory and no unemployed work. The nucleus has issued leaflets regularly on Father Coughlin, Hearst, Hitler, May First, and hold indoor mass meetings. The nucleus works in a territory of German population and is mostly composed of German comrades, or comrades of German descent. The nucleus holds an open-air meeting regularly every week when the weather permits. It holds open Party meetings every now and then. The question of Coughlin and Hearst was discussed as well as Women's Day, May Day, and the subject of war and fascism. All but four read the *Daily Worker*, 11 the *Party Organizer* and only two *The Communist*. They sell only five *Dailies* during the week but on Saturday they sell between 25 and 30. They have secured nine subscriptions, however. The Section Organizer attends the meetings and gives guidance to the comrades. That is one nucleus.

Take another nucleus, in the same district, New York. It had a membership of 32—45 three months ago. Some new members were recruited in the last few months, but *not one of them from the territory of the nucleus*. Six members were dropped. Why were they dropped? One, a shoe worker was five years in the Party and got tired, the comrades say; one food worker because he got

disgusted with the work of the union fraction; one dropped for inactivity. The nucleus has an attendance of 18 to 21. Four belong to A. F. of L. unions, five to independent unions. *None to mass organizations in the territory. No leaflets were issued in the last few months.* In the discussions *no local issues are brought up except* those raised by the section as a whole. Generally, the agenda is *Bureau report, Section instructions, literature, dues.* They all read the *Daily Worker* regularly, fifteen the *Party Organizer*, ten *The Communist*. *The organizer is an office worker, two years in the Party, one month organizer.* The Bureau, they say, meets. The Section tries to help.

Some conclusions from these nuclei: first, a list of where 27 members dropped out and why. Four from shop nuclei (exclusive of Baltimore). Two from Chrysler plant at Detroit, because they were foreign-born, lost their jobs and were terrorized. The reports do not show what they did to bring them back or whether they felt they lost jobs because of carelessness. One dropped from Fisher Body because not politically developed. They don't say what they did to develop him. I just give facts. One was laid off, one transferred to a street unit and dropped out. Three were expelled for non-Communist activity. *In the street units 23 dropped.* One dropped after five years in the Party. One dissatisfied because of food fraction, one dropped for disruption, one housewife for inaction—a Negro woman, one dropped for drinking, one for irresponsibility, one because he didn't attend meetings, another for disruption, 3-6 for inactivity.

#### STABILIZE FUNCTIONARIES

What do these show? First, fluctuation in shop nuclei is lower. In the factory nuclei we have a better opportunity to keep workers and develop them and overcome fluctuation. What does the report show about street nuclei? That where we have a functioning bureau, the work is much better. Where there are more comrades in the trade unions with more native-born and Americanized, or of one nationality (like the Germans), we have a better chance to retain membership. Those nuclei lost more which had bad composition, which didn't discuss Party problems (even resolutions) and where bureaus didn't function.

Continuous service of the organizers has a lot to do with the life of the units. If a unit has one organizer, then another, then another, life begins ever anew every month. Here is a report. In the shop nucleus in the Ford plant they have an organizer for five months, in Chrysler, two months, in Akron, nine months, Ridgewood, one of the best, five months. In a nucleus in Cleveland, also a fairly good

nucleus, which I didn't discuss, the organizer is seven months on the job. The two worst are in New York; their organizers lasted only one month; one a teacher, another an office worker. If a comrade has a chance to work, he learns something; if we move the functionaries like checkers on a checker-board, we can't do anything to stabilize our lower cadres in Sections and units.

In the shop nuclei, out of 159 members, 101 read the *Daily Worker*, 51 the *Party Organizer*, 41 *The Communist*. In the street nuclei partial figures show outside of New York 30 out of 34 read the *Daily Worker*, 66 out of 149 read the *Party Organizer*.

At this point I want to make a few general conclusions on the question of fluctuation. Our reports show that we registered in January 27,000 members. We recruited over 5,000 but the membership increase is much less. Did we actually lose all these members? We always used to get our figures by counting the initiation fees in the office and the dues-payments and from that we concluded the fluctuation. On close examination what is the situation? They didn't even fluctuate into the Party. *In the New York district only 70 per cent of those that paid initiation fees were actually assigned to units.* In other Districts it is the same or worse. We cannot charge against the unit those that never came to the unit.

In that sense we must make changes not only in counting our members, but also in accepting initiation fees. We did not make a final decision yet, but I have some proposals with which we can do something—we should not take initiations until they come into the unit.

#### RECRUITING INADEQUATE

Now let us take the question of recruiting. For every 100 members we recruited 23 members in a period of three months—January, February and March. That does not mean that every member did recruiting work. Certainly, it is clear that every member does not recruit others if only 100 recruited 23. As a matter of fact, only a small percentage of Party members carry on personal recruiting. And in this fact lies the greatest weakness connected with recruiting and reflects our weakness in concentrating on the trade unions, in the factories, etc.

How does this compare with the examined 14 nuclei? Fourteen shop and street nuclei show recruitment of 83 out of 316—also 23 per cent. But this is over a six-month period. But we can figure that this is exactly the same as 23 per 100 for the Party as a whole because we established that only about 50 per cent of those paying initiation fees actually come to the unit, and in the nuclei they count only those that come into the unit, while in the first case they get

23 per cent from those paying the fee which shows that the 14 units examined are typical of the Party. *And therefore, the reasons given for the members who dropped out in these nuclei are more or less typical for the entire Party. If we can attack these questions we will be able to diminish considerably our fluctuation.*

Now what do we have to do in that case to increase recruiting and overcome fluctuation?

First, take out from the closet the letter of the Central Committee on the question of recruiting sent a few months ago which raised with every Party member the question of methods of recruiting—the individual method, the method of personal contact and concentration.

Secondly, we must begin to plan our recruiting on the basis of our main concentration policy in the factories and trade unions, and aim to improve our composition.

Thirdly, improve the methods of assignments and this must be done not only by having a good bookkeeper in the office, but if we recruit on a personal basis, if you recruit a member for a nucleus in a shop, he will not be lost because if he doesn't come around you will go after him and bring him back; you will have contact with him. This is also true in recruiting from the trade unions. But if he is recruited just like now, there will be sad consequences, even under the best circumstances.

#### IMPROVING INNER LIFE

One of the main problems is the question of inner life—the education of our Party members, more stable cadres, improving the attendance at meeting, making the meeting more interesting. These are some of the things we need in order to increase recruiting and check fluctuation.

Just a summary word on these points. I think all of these reports on the nuclei show the following: that the work of the nuclei will be aided by a number of questions:

1. Orientation of the Party towards the *Open Letter*. If you do not have a correct approach on that all other things will not be very profitable.

2. Composition of the Party in our factory and street nuclei! This is most important to be able to carry through the work and tasks among the basic strata of workers.

3. The question of Party education.

4. The question of better, more qualified cadres, and more stabilization of cadres. These problems we have to solve in order to improve the work of our units and Sections.

Take the question of Party education. There will be a separate

report on this question, so I will only deal with it briefly. Reports show that certain Party members have been educated; we see that we have already made certain improvements. But after all, if we really want to do good work among the workers in the factories, etc., how can we expect to get complete results when many members do not know the line of the Party. How can they explain the policy on the Labor Party, etc.? How can they answer questions about Coughlin?

#### WORK IN TRADE UNIONS

We have already established that we have 9,800 Party members in the trade unions. Let us go further into the question. In New York, 4,500 out of 8,754 members, or 55 per cent, are in unions. In Pittsburgh, 290 out of 1,032; Cleveland, 489 out of 1,829—less than 30 per cent; Detroit, 301 out of 1,140—less than 30 per cent; Chicago, 1,162 out of 3,007—or 35 per cent. In Chicago and New York the figures are higher because of many building and needle workers belonging to the unions. But among the basic sections—steel, auto, mining, railroad, we are lagging behind. From this it is clear that we must make a real fight—as the *Open Letter* calls for concentration—especially in connection with the basic industries in concentration districts.

We know we have a large number of unemployed Party members who have difficulties in getting into unions because of the bureaucrats not accepting unemployed; because of high initiation and dues. We should fight for lower initiations and dues, but we shouldn't wait until we win that in the A. F. of L. Every effort should be made to secure money to bring in our unemployed comrades into the unions.

We can indicate that the language comrades are less in the trade unions than the Americanized and native-born.

What does this show? *That in general the language members, the language bureaus, have not yet organized their work on the basis of the main line of the Open Letter.* That is one conclusion we can draw, but not the only one. We must assume we have not made a good examination of our language members. In their press we find that they don't speak of the vital questions in the trade unions and the Party resolutions and tactics. As to the bureaus, they don't organize their work yet when they go in for circulation drives and in the clubs they don't organize their work to go to the main strata. They sometimes feel—what do you want us to do—go organize the American workers for you? No. They must go to the most important language workers. We want you to go to the auto workers who are South-Slavs. We must decide here to make a break in that respect,

to improve the control of the work of our language bureau from the Central Committee, Organization and Agitation-Propaganda Commissions, and more forcefully to push the Party line in our language work. We must learn how to utilize the very important organizations that we have under our influence. Some progress has been made in that connection. In Cleveland, at Fisher Body Company, the Hungarians; in Detroit, at the Ford Company, the I.W.O. took a leading part in organizing the Ford Conference. But these are isolated examples.

#### TRADE UNION FRACTIONS

Now with regard to the trade union fractions. We have in most cases what you would call loose Party fractions. Of course where we worked in the A. F. of L. for a longer period, as in the needle and building trades, we have them organized much better.

In the basic industries—auto, steel, mining, marine, textile—you will find, in most cases, local fractions. With the exception of marine and partly textile, the Party nucleus in the factory coincides with the local of the A. F. of L. union. *In that case the Party nucleus inevitably assumes the functions of the fraction as well as of the basic Party organization.* We have to take up, however, the question of fractions much further—on a city-wide and national scale.

We are beginning to work out these problems. The comrades are trying to initiate general meetings of comrades in a given industry. This is not always the case. As a general rule, we cannot call meetings of comrades in steel, auto, etc., on a city-wide scale because this is too bulky and would lead to exposure and discrimination in the event of a single company agent ever succeeding in getting into the fraction. More or less the system should be along the following lines. In Detroit, for example, *the shop nucleus is also the fraction in the local union.* They lead the work in the unit as the fraction. At the same time we should set up a *special leading committee to lead the work in all auto locals.* How should it be composed? If we had our comrades as delegates from these locals to the delegated district council of the union, they would be the leading fraction, but this is not always the case. We have a few people. They must become the kernel for that leading fraction plus representatives from the most important nuclei, meeting more or less regularly and at the same time be the connecting link with the rank and file through the nuclei and through the Party comrades in street units who work in factories where no shop nucleus exists.

Now in mining in Pittsburgh. First of all, the mine unit is also the fraction in the local union, but then we must organize on a sub-district scale—what you might call a leading fraction, from time to

time calling other Party members or representatives of Party members, at the same time setting up a leading fraction in the Pittsburgh District to lead the comrades in the union as a whole in the District.

In textile—let us take Paterson. What have we done there now? We have a leading fraction in silk—executive board members—a general fraction. There is a similar development in dye. With exceptions, most of the comrades belong to nuclei and, therefore, the fraction does not meet so often. *Then we should have a joint fraction which should combine dye and silk.*

The fraction in marine. There we must build separate local or district fractions of *I.L.A., I.S.U., telegraphers, etc., and then have a joint leading fraction to unite all on an industrial basis.*

#### ON NATIONAL FRACTIONS

On the question of national fractions we do not have an easy problems to solve. We have seen the problem in the Party national fraction conferences held recently in *auto, textile, mining and steel*. There we had occasion to see our weaknesses. We cannot say today that in any case we do have real functioning national fraction leadership although we have made some real progress and already set up at least skeleton committees with a full-time comrade in charge of each national fraction. Yet we must add something else. We cannot speak in the present stage of building national fractions in these industries that can guide the daily work of the local fractions in the various districts. That is impossible. How are they composed? Take mining. The leading committee has T—— in charge. This fraction is composed largely of people around Pittsburgh. They cannot lead the daily work. *That must be done by the Party district committee.* Some of the directives are given through the Trade Union Commission of the Central Committee. But what can the national fractions do? *They can certainly react to questions.* They can give guidance through popularizing all new experiences among the local fractions, by giving information through correspondence, through the utilization of the *Daily Worker, The Communist, the Party Organizer*, through occasional visits to the main fractions, through regular conferences such as we just held. *Are they doing that? They are not.* This has to be changed.

The weakest phase in our fraction work is in how we are bringing forward the position of the Party to the masses. Not alone the question of the basic revolutionary program, but even the Party position on the current questions are not put forward sufficiently to the workers. The workers do not know the Party position, and then they feel that we are outsiders when we speak of general questions,



They hear from the unions on the immediate issues, then the Party comes out on issues that they think don't concern them.

#### MUST REACT PROMPTLY

Take the textile situation. Roosevelt comes out with a plan. Every politician talks about it. They make speeches about Japan, etc. We wait. What are we waiting for? Or take the mining situation. If, for example, we would wait until June 16, it would be worse than if we waited until May 30, but why should it take us three weeks to talk to the miners on the Lewis April 1 truce? The *Daily Worker* did, of course, react immediately. But not the national fraction.

*Second point.* We do give attention to detailed trade union issues. That is an improvement. There was a time when the fractions were mostly conducting only general agitation. Now they are organizers too. That is a great achievement in comparison with the recent past.

*Thirdly,* in recruiting to the Party. I want to take here the question of mining and marine as two examples. In marine you have the following recruiting figures: in the last three months with only 406 Party members, we recruited 254. In mining with 1,073 members, we recruited 179. Comrades, a lot has to do with the work of the fractions. Our fractions outside of marine, which is one of the best examples, are not yet concentrating on building the Party as a constant task.

#### TRAINING PARTY CADRES

On the question of the relations of the fractions and the units, on the trade union questions, we have some real problems. We always hear about the relations of the fractions and the units. What is the problem there? The problem is not that one special comrade does too much trade union work and one too much Party work. We are not suffering from such things as yet. The problem is that many leading comrades who are active in the trade unions are not active in the Party nuclei and sections. Then, we have a lot of comrades in the units who think that they would be driven out as Unit Organizers or Section Organizers if they would join a union. New York will prove this. The problem is, therefore, not to talk so much about relations and to make plans, but to do a very simple thing—to get some outstanding trade union comrades to join some units, especially shop nuclei, where they exist, or become active in the sections, and there they will be able to mobilize the comrades for trade union work and will learn how to bring the Party forward in the mass work and get more mass workers into the lower Party organizations.

On the question of Party cadres. What do the reports show?

Some improvements were made in that respect. Certainly. The Party, in controlling, assigning and educating the forces, is making improvements. The figures on schooling are important. We have the workers' schools, section training schools, national schools, district schools, etc.

We must also say there are increased literature sales in the Party of the *Party Organizer*, *The Communist*, etc. This all means an education of the Party forces and the training of cadres.

I can also add that there are developing in many sections and districts functionaries conferences, functionaries classes. For example, when I was in Cleveland, they were going to start a class for organizers, org. secretaries and agit-prop directors, and this has an important bearing on the training of cadres. But we have a great shortage of cadres. I can mention only one point in this connection. Take Toledo, for example. The Cleveland district, as we know, is one of our excellent districts in many respects, developing the work on many fronts, including cadres, but yet the Cleveland district has not solved the question of an organizer in a place like Toledo where a year ago there was a heroic struggle, which was again repeated this year, where we did not play the leading role. We have about 180 Party members there, although it is true they are not in the factories. But why are they not in the factories? Why did we not recruit since the last strike in the factories? It is a question of leadership, and the center also takes the responsibility. This is one typical case which was recently in the picture. How many places do we not know about, because we have no organizer?

#### GREATER TASKS REQUIRE BETTER CADRES

More than that. The Party is growing, even though at a slow pace, the Party tasks are growing, the mass organizations are growing. The problems are becoming more complicated; we are not fighting an enemy under very simple conditions, where everyone can see the fight and who is who. There are all sorts of camouflage—Coughlin, Sinclair, the reformists. The problems are becoming more complicated and we must know how to answer them; the situation is becoming more tense. We just got word from Detroit of the passing of the Dunckel Bill, and this is not an accident of Michigan. *All these combined facts require more from the basic industries, more mass workers—cadres, cadres of a better composition, more native-born, proletarian cadres, more reliable, more educated, more qualified.* We must not be satisfied for just anyone going to work, and we must help them. Above all, cadres that *can have initiative, to whom it will not be necessary to send telegrams on every small questions.*

*These are problems after all, not for tomorrow, but for today.*

Also we must talk about reliable cadres in the present period. What do we mean? We have a living example, here at our plenum, of what we mean. We mean comrades who, under the greatest pressure, will stand up—like Comrade Herndon.

We need forces that can do these things—that can work against Coughlin, against the bureaucrats, and will not lose themselves even if the *Daily Worker* cannot be delivered; or at least forces that can read the *Daily Worker* editorials and know what to do.

How can we improve our cadres?

First, it is necessary to adopt a more concise, more systematic policy in dealing with questions of developing forces, and not forget that we are dealing with human beings, as we sometimes do. We look upon Section Organizers as figures, there is a lack of personalization. A functionary is a human being, he may have certain difficulties in handling certain questions. How can we approach and achieve that aside from schooling. If we were to go much further than we did with the shop nuclei leadership in assigning leading comrades to all the important shop nuclei, the most important trade union fractions, where we need leadership, we would greatly advance the training of cadres.

*We cannot do this mechanically, but we can do it and it should be done.*

We would be in contact with three to four thousand members daily in the shop nuclei alone, and we can help them. An example is the shop unit where B—— is attached. He works with that unit regularly; every member reads *The Communist*, the *Communist International*, the *Inprecorr*, etc.; they react to the Red scare. This is a shipyard nucleus. It is inspiring when you see what has been done with that nucleus. If all the leading comrades were to do the same, it would radically change the situation in our Party. We are capable of inspiring forces and guiding them. If we could do that we would not have to be afraid that the Party would not have forces.

Then, of course, there is the main question of training through the mass struggles. We get direct lessons from struggles. We must give much more attention to the comrades actively engaged in the main struggles, drawing lessons from experiences, etc. That is the basic education, and must be supplemented by special educational work, such as schools, classes, etc.

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# Let Us Penetrate Deeper into the Rural Areas

*(Report to the Meeting of the Central Committee,  
C.P.U.S.A., May 25-27, 1935)*

By CLARENCE A. HATHAWAY

IT is necessary at this time to take up agrarian work, and work in the rural districts, before the Central Committee because of special problems that exist in that field of work. At the outset, we must note a serious retrogression in our work in this field which requires most careful examination by the entire Party.

The high point of the Party's agrarian work was reached during the period of the first Farmers Emergency Relief Conference in Washington. At that time the mass fight of the farmers to protect their farms was sweeping the farm areas. A wave of evictions and foreclosures had engulfed the countryside, and, in addition, forced sales were wiping out the property assets of the farmers. Combined with this, and linked up with the desire of the farmers to protect their farms, was the struggle for higher prices. It was these factors that aroused the masses and provided the basis for our successes during that period.

The broad united front policies which were applied by the Party and by our comrades in agrarian work enabled us to play an important part in the struggles of that period. The program of mass struggle against forced sales, evictions, etc., and the creation of committees of action of all farmers who were ready to fight on the basis of such a program, enabled us to reach relatively deep into the masses of farmers, and to influence to a degree the character and course of the struggle that then took place.

But after the first Farmers Emergency Relief Conference and the creation of the Farmers National Committee of Action, new tendencies found expression that immediately served to hamper the further extension of our work. These new factors in the main were the following:

First, there was a sectarian narrowing down of our appeal in the countryside. There was a tendency on the part of our comrades to direct the broad mass movement into the United Farmers League,

and side by side with that, a tendency to make the United Farmers League the Communist Party in the rural districts. This was disastrous in the spreading out of our work.

Second, there was a Right opportunistic yielding to the pressure of the upper strata of the farmers—a tendency to limit our activities and our demands to the demands and activities of the rich and middle farmers, rather than base ourselves on the mass of the poor farmers.

Third, there was a failure to analyze the changes in Roosevelt's policies with regard to the farmers as compared with Hoover's and the effect of these new policies on the poor and middle farmers as distinct from the rich farmers in the rural districts.

Fourth, and growing out of the first three errors, there was the development of differences among our leading comrades in agrarian work that became a further factor in hampering the development of our work.

These are the chief reasons why we have suffered setbacks in our agrarian work at the present time, and which make it necessary to take it up at this Plenum.

Now, a few remarks on the agrarian situation. All comrades know that the agrarian crisis has dragged on in the United States throughout the entire post-war period, corresponding to a similar agrarian crisis in most of the agrarian nations of the world.

As Comrade Stalin pointed out in his report to the last Russian Party Congress, the existence of this agrarian crisis, and the merging of the industrial crisis with it, is a major reason for the extreme depth and length of the present crisis. He also pointed out that the industrial crisis has been a factor intensifying the agrarian crisis, leading to the substitution of hand labor for machine labor, the substitution of the horse for the tractor, the degeneration of technique generally, and to the decrease or the complete abandonment of the use of fertilizer. These changes in agriculture caused the industrial crisis to become still more protracted. It follows that the collapse of agriculture and of agricultural credits was a major factor contributing to the financial crisis of 1932-33.

So far as Hoover's policies are concerned, his intervention in the agrarian situation was primarily, and even quite openly, to save the banks, the insurance companies and the interests of the big industrialists and richest farmers.

#### ROOSEVELT'S OBJECTIVE THE SAME AS HOOVER'S

Roosevelt's intervention had the same general objective, but was characterized by different methods. The chief differences between Roosevelt and Hoover in the approach to agrarian problems, and to the solution of the critical problems of the banks, insurance com-

panies and of capitalism generally, were to provide a way out for the biggest landlords and richest farmers.

Second, Roosevelt made certain apparent concessions to middle farmers in order to liquidate the mass struggles then sweeping the rural areas.

Third, Roosevelt undertook to place the large mass of farmers, the poorest farmers, either on outright subsistence farms, or at least on a basis that would take them, in the main, out of commercial production.

This latter task Roosevelt undertook to carry through in a more controlled manner than was being achieved through the devastating effects of the continued crisis, and through the forced sales which were being used by those who controlled farm credit. This fact is borne out by the stated objectives of spokesmen for the A.A.A. when writing on these questions.

In this connection, and before going on to an examination of the A.A.A. itself, it probably is well to say a word about the delegation of farmers that visited Washington only a few days ago to declare their support of the A.A.A. and to demand of Congress the continuation of this A.A.A.

We have a document here sent out by the county agent in the state of South Dakota. He shows very clearly how the conference was organized. I quote:

"The state has decided to send a delegation to Washington to confer with the Agricultural Adjustment officials along with similar groups from other states. To defray expenses, each committee-man is asked to donate one day's wages to apply on the expenses of this trip. It has been suggested by the State Board of Review that the chairman of either the hog or wheat associations go along on this trip.

"It has been suggested by the State Board of Review that the chairman of either the corn-hog or wheat control associations be a delegate to this conference. The delegation will be leaving May 11 and we desire to know whether you will be willing to donate one day's corn-hog time for this purpose.

"Please return the enclosed card immediately."

On that basis they organized their mass support for the A.A.A. and the farmers' contingents. This is proof that it was through the collaboration of the A.A.A. and the rich farmers that a delegation went to Washington to boost the A.A.A. crop destruction program.

Now, as to the A.A.A. itself. The declared objective of the A.A.A. was to raise agricultural prices to the 1910-1914 relationship between agricultural and industrial prices, that is, to establish the parity that then existed as the basis for present agricultural prices.

The methods by which this was to be accomplished was first, *crop reduction*, and second, *processing taxes* out of which farmers were to be paid for curtailing the production of crops. Now the question is, has the A.A.A., in its efforts to establish parity between the industrial and agricultural prices at the 1910-1914 level, actually succeeded?

#### EFFECTS OF THE A.A.A.

Here, we can give some figures to show how it has worked out. First, I will examine it from the viewpoint of the farmers as a whole, without any effort to deal with different categories of farmers.

During the entire year of 1934, as compared with 1933, *the prices* received by farmers for their products increased 29 per cent. The prices paid by farmers for things they had to buy increased 13 per cent. The apparent change in purchasing power, according to *prices*, would be plus 14 per cent in favor of the farmers.

The change in *total cash income* received, including all A.A.A. benefits, increased 21 per cent; excluding all benefits, it increased only 13 per cent. The change in actual purchasing power, therefore, based on *cash income*, including A.A.A. benefits, was 7 per cent higher in 1934, but excluding benefits, it was zero.

Now, how was that accomplished? By the simple process of simultaneously reducing crops and pushing prices upward. Prices went upward, but the farmers had smaller crops. The *total income* did not increase in proportion to the increase in farm prices.

The benefit, therefore, which the farmer received was the plus 7 per cent that he got in the form of a subsidy from the processing taxes. He got nothing from any actual increase in total income through the medium of higher price levels.

Now, if we take it for the first quarter of this year, as distinct from last year, the figures are different.

The prices received by the farmers are 36 per cent above what they were last year. The prices which the farmers paid are 8 per cent above. The apparent change, therefore, in parity prices is 26 per cent. But the change in *cash income*, that is, the total amount that the farmer received, including all benefits was only plus 4 per cent, and excluding benefits, again zero. But the change in actual purchasing power, including benefits, was minus 4 per cent, excluding benefits it was minus 7 per cent. The first quarter of this year, therefore, he actually lost out as compared with last year.

Then, it is significant to note that as far as this year is concerned, income from crops shows a 24 per cent loss, while the cash income from the sale of live stock and live stock products shows an

increase of 24 per cent. In other words, the curtailment of crops has been so great that agriculture could only maintain its income level of last year by the relatively heavy movement of live stock. But with the inevitable curtailment of income from that source, there can result only a further decline in the income of the farmers.

But these figures apply only when one considers *the farmers as a whole* under the A.A.A., without any effort to differentiate between the effects of the A.A.A. on one category of farmers as against another. Now, it is not possible to present elaborate figures in this connection, to show how rich, middle and poor farmers were affected. But some significant facts can be established.

The first thing that can be definitely established is that the average poor farmer, had he received a subsidy from the Government, would have received a benefit check, in accordance with the degree of curtailment of his crop, of an average of \$90 during the course of 1934. Actually we know that the farmer did *not* receive the benefit check. In the South, it was paid directly to either the landlord or the bankers. In other sections of the country, the creditors were on hand when the check was delivered, ready to lift it from the farmer immediately upon its receipt. From these facts we know that even the small sums the poor farmer was supposed to receive, in most cases *he did not* receive.

Side by side with those facts, we also have some outstanding examples of the kind of subsidies some farmers did receive. It is such "farmers" who favor the A.A.A. program. For example, from governmental records, we have a hog raiser in California who received a government subsidy of \$400,000. We have a cotton grower in Arkansas, where the share croppers struggle is now taking place, who received a government allotment of \$80,000. We have the Florida sugar corporation which received \$800,000 in the form of benefits from the A.A.A. Now, with such figures available, it becomes clear that in the countryside, the A.A.A. is working out in the same manner as the N.R.A. in the industries, namely, the already rich are being further enriched at the expense of the masses of the poor.

Now, a word as to forced sales, and foreclosures. Did the various measures of the Roosevelt administration, the A.A.A., the credit measures and so forth, result in the stopping of forced sales? *No, they did not!* What they did do was to stop the very marked upward trend of forced sales which was under way when Roosevelt took office. They stopped the rapid multiplication of forced sales not only because it was having disastrous effects on rural economy, but because the forced sales and the struggles of the masses against the forced sales (penny sales, etc.) were completely undermining the



whole system of rural credits and affecting the whole financial structure of the nation. Mortgages were becoming worthless. Powerful creditors were facing bankruptcy by the developments in the rural districts. It was this that Roosevelt undertook to head off. In heading off what was becoming disastrous for the bankers and others involved in the farm credit situation, Roosevelt began a general process of more systematically pressing the *poorest* farmers off the land. This he undertook to do in a more controlled manner, in a manner that would not jeopardize the capitalists or the rich farmer-capitalists in the rural districts who had become deeply enmeshed in the agrarian crisis developments. As for the poor farmers and middle farmers, they did not benefit from the A.A.A., and evictions and foreclosures continued, though at a slower pace.

If we examine the figures we find, first, for the United States as a whole (considered throughout on the basis of number per thousand) in 1931, the number of forced sales was 26; in 1932, 41; in 1933, 54. That indicates the rapid upward pre-Roosevelt trend. Then Roosevelt intervened, and the number was brought down from 54 to 39. But the process still continued, and these figures include the full year of 1934.

Now, if we take special sections of the country, for example, the whole Northwest and Central area (North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, etc.) in 1931, 31 per thousand; in 1932 it jumped to 52; in 1933, to 72; and in 1934 it dropped to 50.

Then the South, in 1931, 25; in 1932, 50; in 1933, 63; and in 1934 back to 44 per thousand.

In the West South Central area in 1931, 22; in 1932, 40; in 1933, 51; and in 1934 back to 34. The South Atlantic states in 1931, 32 per thousand; in 1932, 48; in 1933, 59; and in 1934 back to 40.

You can see from these figures the sharp upward movement, the checking of that movement and the decline. Roosevelt's policies stopped the climb. But still there are enough evictions, foreclosures and forced sales going on to emphasize the seriousness of this problem for the poor farmers in the rural districts.

Just as a matter of interest, note how Huey Long in Louisiana and his allies in Mississippi are sharing the wealth. In 1931, in Mississippi, 44 per thousand; in Louisiana, 21. In 1932, in Mississippi, 99 per thousand; in Louisiana, 45. In 1933, Mississippi, 115; Louisiana 75. In 1934, Mississippi still 101; and in Louisiana still 64. These two states still remain the highest in the union. Yet it is there that we have demagogues who talk of sharing the wealth of the country. One can ask: whose wealth are they sharing, and with whom?

## MILLIONS TO BE REDUCED TO SUBSISTENCE FARMING

Now, more as to the general position of the poor farmer under the A.A.A. Here, outstanding Administration spokesmen have openly declared that there are from two to three million farmers in excess of the number needed in the U.S.—two to three million farmers who must be taken out of commercial farming. With that in mind, they have developed a full set of plans for *subsistence farming* in order to accomplish the taking of masses of farmers out of commercial production.

For the South, this already finds its expression in the new Bankhead Bill now before the federal legislature. There, according to statements made, there are from 250,000 to 300,000 tenant farmers who have been pressed off the land by the cotton curtailment program, and who are today without any means of livelihood. But the landlords, though not very deeply stirred by their economic plight, are afraid of losing them as potential agricultural laborers. They want to keep them there, but in such a form as will relieve the landlords of the burden. The result is the Bankhead Bill, designed to provide these people with plots of land, probably ranging from twenty to forty acres, sub-marginal land, on which they barely can eke out a livelihood. There is the proviso that the government will stake them for the first season's work, after which they must pay the government for the land. While operating the land, they must agree to work certain portions of the year for the landlords. Thus, instead of a share-cropping system, we see substituted what virtually amounts to a peonage system. This is being sponsored by the Administration.

In addition, under the work relief projects being considered, the plan is to set up a whole series of subsistence farms on which the farmers who are being evicted, sold out, etc., will be moved. They are to be given a plot of sub-marginal land on which they can earn a bare livelihood for their families.

Now, as to the question of drought relief in the rural areas and the general farm relief policies of the Administration. There are approximately two million farming families entirely dependent on relief. In order to get relief in the rural areas, they have to qualify as a pauper. If one has any means of livelihood, he is not put on the relief rolls. In one form or another they are given small credits or made to liquidate whatever assets they may have in order to maintain their family. These two million are people who have met this pauper requirement.

Here also, the relief system, as the other administration policies, is being used to press the poor farmers out of competition with the bigger farmers, and to transform their farms into virtual subsistence

farms. In this connection, they established what first was known as a ten unit system. This was afterwards reduced to eight, to seven, etc. By the unit system, they allowed a farmer a horse as a unit, a cow as a unit, a pig as two units, a certain number of chickens as a unit. If he had more than the allowed number of units, he had to sell a horse, etc., before he was qualified for relief. This system of forcing them to dispose of their livestock before they became eligible for relief virtually turned the farmer into a peasant. It created peasant-type farms having no possibility of becoming a factor in general commercial agricultural production.

The relief given in the rural districts averages from five to ten dollars a week—it originally did. The Roosevelt administration later cut it down. And now in region after region they are serving notice that relief will be cut off entirely. In this they are taking a further step that tends to wipe them out as farmers. In cutting off relief, they are informing the farmers that they must take jobs on work-relief projects which makes it impossible for them to continue, in any form, as commercial farmers. Combined with this, there is the final point, which I mentioned before—the *re-settlement project* by which they hope to transport scores of farmers from one section into other sections of the country, with a number even being taken to Alaska.

I want to read one paragraph from a report put out by the Farmers Research Bureau, because it indicates the wide discrimination practised in one part of the country as against another, and the discrimination against Negroes on relief (Negro sharecroppers, etc.):

“The average family receiving direct relief gets about six dollars per week. This varies greatly. In Kentucky the average was about \$2.56 per week in September; while in New York State the average was about \$10.59 per week for the same month. There is also a wide variation between the amount of relief received by white and Negro workers. In Dallas County, Ala., which is predominantly agricultural—in June, 1934—where sixty-five per cent of the population on relief was Negro, the average amount of relief per week was \$1.20, while relief going to white families in that section was \$3.80. This is an indication of how discrimination is carried through in the rural districts.”

Now, comrades, as to the credit facilities made available. Here again we find exactly the same objectives—to force the mass of the impoverished farmers either off the farms or onto subsistence farms. Loans are conditional first, on the creditors agreeing to give the government the first lien on the crops. If a fellow wants to get a loan, he has to get his creditors to agree to this loan before he can get it from the government. That is quite a fence to hurdle. After

having mounted that hurdle, they then give to the county agent virtual control over the planting and marketing of the crop. And finally, they use the credit facilities as a means to compel the poorest farmer to adopt the full A.A.A. program, to curtail production drastically. These, together with a series of secondary conditions, virtually make the need of the farmers for credit a means of black-jacking them into abandoning all production for commercial purposes.

From all this it is clear that the New Deal agrarian program is being applied with the same class objectives as is the New Deal generally—the further enrichment of the rich at the expense of the poor—by making the poor still poorer.

One might, however, ask—if the class character of the A.A.A. and the auxiliary agricultural measures are so clear, how is it that the administration, the reformist farm leaders, etc., have been able to influence no small number of middle farmers, and for that matter no small number of poor farmers, into believing that this program was something that would benefit them?

The answer is the belief of the farmers in the theory of higher prices. In a typical petty-bourgeois manner, he sees in the raising of prices the solution of all problems. When the A.A.A. is sold to him as a price-raising measure, as something which will restore the parity between industrial and agricultural prices, this becomes a powerful argument for the average farmer.

Secondly, the farmer is told that he is being exploited by the middlemen, and that he must of necessity set up cooperatives as a means of controlling the market prices of his goods. Such cooperative marketing bodies, coupled with the promises of the A.A.A. program, are the chief means by which the A.A.A. program has been sold to large masses of farmers. This, incidentally, is the chief basis for the programs of the various farm organizations.

#### ALIGNMENTS AMONG THE FARMERS

Now, a few words on those farm organizations, beginning farthest to the Right, and moving toward the Left. I start with the *Farm Bureau*. The Farm Bureau claims a membership of 225,000 members. They have their agents in a large number of counties throughout the country, and are most active in support of the whole Roosevelt agricultural program, specifically in support of the A.A.A. In fact, the county agents act as the field men for the A.A.A., in many cases, in carrying through the A.A.A. crop reduction program. The Farm Bureau serves most effectively as the administration's instrument in the carrying through of its program among the farmers.

The second largest organization, and next in order to the Bureau as far as political position is concerned, is the National Grange, claiming a membership of 548,000. As for their program, they still set forth all the claimed objectives of the A.A.A.—the demand for a pre-war price parity as their basic demand. But this, they admit, has not been realized in the A.A.A. So, like the A. F. of L. with regard to the N.R.A.,—they want “teeth put into the A.A.A.” to accomplish this purpose. They, however, modify their support for the A.A.A. in the sense that they object to a further extension of acreage reduction, declaring that with the development of the drought, etc., it is unnecessary. This reflects on their part a certain yielding to a changed attitude among masses of farmers toward the A.A.A.

Incidentally, in support of the emphasis that Comrade Browder put on the importance of the sales tax as a major political issue, all farm organizations, beginning with the most conservative Farm Bureau, oppose the sales tax.

As to the Farmers Union, it takes a position slightly to the Left of that taken by the Grange, taking the position that the A.A.A. is entirely wrong, that is, that the results have been entirely bad for the farmers; but they reject proposals to repeal it on the grounds that this would mean reverting back to what existed under Hoover. Therefore, they say, it is necessary to amend the A.A.A. It must be transformed into something that will benefit the farmers. In addition, as does the Farmers Holiday Association, they come forward in support of the Frazier Bill for the refinancing of farm mortgages; they make a strong demand for inflation, and support the Thomas-Messingale Bill to establish “cost-of-production” prices.

The Farmers Holiday Association, outside of the United Farmers League and those organizations influenced directly by us, is the most “Left” of the farm organizations. They stand for outright repeal of the A.A.A. In addition, they support the proposals for the refinancing of farm mortgages, and for inflation. They are most active in the development of sentiment for a third party movement among the farmers. Recently, in Des Moines, they sponsored a convention and mass meeting with Huey Long as the main speaker, and tried there to initiate a movement for a third party. It is significant that this organization has also been most militant recently in opposition to Communists, declaring their opposition to dictatorship by Communists, as well as to dictatorship by fascists, taking a typical reformist position, but which under present conditions, means falling directly in line with the propaganda of the fascist-advocate, Hearst.

The first two, the two most conservative organizations undoubt-

edly are the largest, but the latter two are the ones that in the recent period have been the most responsive to the growing militancy among the farmers. This is shown by the character of the demands they bring forward, by the struggles they have participated in, and by the militancy of these struggles. This is particularly true of the Farmers Holiday Association, which played an active part in the fight against evictions, forced sales, etc., in the Middle West, and for higher prices.

It is important to say a couple of words on the character of their proposed measures as a substitute for the A.A.A. Their proposals are: refinancing of mortgages, establish prices on basis of cost and production, and inflation of currency. These measures, like the A.A.A. which they fight against, are measures that can only benefit the upper strata of farmers. They would each injure the position of the poorer farmers.

Cost of production, for example, would be established not on the basis of cost of production on small, sub-marginal, or technically backward farms, but on the basis of costs on those farms that have all the advantages of good land, large scale production, fertilizer, machinery, credit, etc. Prices fixed by such standards would further the wiping out of the poor farmers; it would speed up the subsistence-farm program.

Likewise, inflation—this is conceivably beneficial for the large farmer who has the possibility of expanding production, of holding back crops, of adjusting himself to unsettled market conditions, of liquidating old debts, etc.; but the small farmer would be virtually wiped out by inflation. This requires no extended argument here.

As for the refinancing of farm mortgages, this presupposes a crisis of short duration, or the ability of the farmers to better repay their heavy debts within a period of a few years. Again, this may become possible for the well-to-do farmer, but certainly the poor farmer will be no more able to pay a year or two from now than he is at present. In the meantime he would have the additional expense and problems of "refinancing". The very refinancing of mortgages would further the process of wiping out the small, insecure farmer.

#### CLEAR, CORRECT PROGRAM WILL RALLY POOR AND MIDDLE FARMERS

Comrades, from this, I think the character of the Administration's program, and that of reformist opposition to the Administration is made clear. These facts show that there is a real basis for the development of a mass movement in the rural districts, both against the Administration and against the rich-farmer policies of the old-line farm organizations. One sees it in the share-croppers'

movement in Alabama and Arkansas, in the response given to our Sioux Falls Conference and in many local actions, in the militancy of the poor farmers. The militancy expressed by the delegates to the Sioux Falls Conference—delegates who came from the Farmers Union, the Holiday Association, the Grange, etc.—showed a desire to struggle against conditions as they are. But they have to be provided with a program that clearly reflects the class interests of the poorest strata of the farmers, the poor and middle farmers, as against the program of the big landlords, the rich farmers and the capitalists generally—as against the Roosevelt program.

Our first problem as a Party, and the problem of our comrades in the agricultural field, is that of meeting the needs of the poor and middle farmers, giving to them a clear, correct class program, around which we can center the struggle in the countryside.

In considering this the first measure to be brought forward by the Party and by our comrades is the *Farmers Emergency Relief Bill*. The campaign to win mass support for this bill is of paramount importance. In this bill there is clearly embodied the repeal of the A.A.A., the cancellation of debts, the fight for production credits, for adequate relief, etc. Those are the central immediate issues around which the fight must be developed in the countryside.

In addition to that there are immediate actions that naturally flow out of the conditions described in the report. For example, there are possibilities in many of the Middle Western states now for relatively good crops this year as compared with last year, due to more abundant rainfall. But already, with prospects of a better crop, the farmers are being hounded by their creditors who are preparing to grab any income the farmers have for the debts they have coming. There an immediate demand is the rallying of the poor farmers to protect their possible income from this year's crop.

Second, there is the bringing of the fight on work relief wages into the rural areas, drawing the farmers into this general fight against the \$19 to \$94 wage scales now proposed on work relief. The farmers will share these jobs with city workers.

Then a fight must be developed against sending farmers to Alaska, or to subsistence farms. The fight of the farmers to remain on the land they have long farmed, with support from the government in the form of production credits (seed, etc.), and adequate relief, to enable them to continue to exist as farmers, must be supported and led.

Then, in addition, there is the point raised by Comrade Browder, the fight against the sales tax.

Finally, there is the whole question of civil rights, the right of the farmers to organize and struggle. This is extremely important,

because the farmers are today being pressed as are the workers in the city. We can see this in Alabama, in Arkansas, in Nebraska, in the Dakotas, all through the Middle West wherever militancy has been shown by the farmers.

Connected with all other questions and of great importance are the issues of *fascism* and *war*. Large masses of farmers can and must be brought into the regional congresses to be held by the American League Against War and Fascism preparatory to the National Congress of the League.

The comrades might well ask: We have had this program in its main outline for a considerable period of time. We have the basic resolution on agrarian work adopted at the Extraordinary Party Conference, and despite the New Deal, the resolution stands as a basic guide for the Party? Why is it that the program has not been realized?

One of the central reasons, as I have already stated, is *the sectarian tendencies* that have run all through our farm work, and that have not yet been overcome. It is the tendency generally to narrow things down, to try and keep the movement within the narrow confines of our own circles. There has not been the effort to penetrate into the Farmers Holiday Association and the Farmers Union and other farm organizations that have mass influence in the rural districts. To the degree that we have established contact with these farmers, the tendency has been to draw them away from these bodies and into the United Farmers League.

Our policy has not been the broad, mass policy of setting in motion great numbers of farmers, but rather one of satisfying ourselves with a relatively small circle of farmers who were ready to accept our leadership and our program unquestionably. These sectarian tendencies are things that have to be overcome in all phases of the rural work of the Party.

The Political Bureau has emphasized to the comrades in the farming field the necessity, in the first place, of penetrating into the mass farm organizations in an effort to win for ourselves a real base among the broad masses of the farmers. In doing this, however, the Political Bureau does not want to create the impression that our task in the work among the farmers is the same as our task among the workers. In the case of the workers, our objective is the unity of the entire working class against capitalism. In the case of farmers, it cannot be formulated in that manner, because among the farmers we find capitalists, rich farmers, who have interests quite different from those of the mass of the poor farmers. Obviously, our objective among the farmers is not a general effort to unite *all* farmers, regardless of their economic and social position. Rather, it is to



create a differentiation, bringing the poor farmers directly under the leadership of the workers. As for the middle farmers, we must aim to win them as active fighters together with the poor farmers, and against fascism. As a minimum requirement, they must be neutralized so they will be ineffective as instruments of the bourgeoisie in its fight against the workers.

In our efforts to join the farm organizations, first considerations should be given to the Holiday Association and the Farm Union, because these organizations are the most militant among the farmers. They have embraced the most militant farmers and have themselves carried on the most active struggles during the past period of time.

Our objective must be to organize the smaller farmers, the poorer farmers within these organizations on a class basis, and through them to develop the struggle for the demands of the farmers as already outlined: the demand for the Federal Emergency Relief Bill, opposition to the policies of the officialdom, which supports the agrarian policies of the Roosevelt Administration, etc.

#### UNITED FRONT ACTION

We should, under no circumstances, hesitate to enter into aggressive united front activities with the members of the Grange, Farm Bureau and all farm organizations that may exist. Wherever there is a branch of any organization that can be drawn into struggle against the A.A.A., for the Farmers Emergency Relief Bill, against evictions, foreclosures, or forced sales, for increased, immediate relief, for adequate production credits—these issues are issues around which united front activities should be developed. In fact, it is around these issues, and through our united front efforts that we can break the poor farmers away from the rich-farmer leadership of the old-line farm organizations. We always must take into consideration the differentiation between the poorer farmers and the rich. This is basic in the application of the united front tactic among the farmers. Our objective is to unite the poor farmers together with the workers, against the capitalists, and against the rich farmers.

Now, to deal with a further factor equally hampering the development of our farm work. I refer to the tendency on the part of our comrades to capitulate to the program of the richer farmers and to the illusions that exist among the middle farmers. In this connection one can state very categorically that the failure to develop a campaign for the support of the Farmers Emergency Relief Bill was due to an opportunist fear on the part of our comrades of an energetic mass fight against the cost of production

program, against the refinancing program and the inflation program of the reformists. The theory was that these ideas were so deep-seated among the farmers that it would narrow down our appeal to the farmers, and would weaken our ability to draw them into such conferences as the Sioux Falls Conference, the Chicago Conference, etc.

In reality, the opposite was the situation. By not raising the issue of the Farmers Emergency Relief Bill, they permitted the Frazier Bill, the Thomas-Martingale Bill, etc., to stand in the way of winning the farm masses. They were weakening our ability to draw the farmers into the struggle by breaking the hold that the reformists had over them.

Our comrades, likewise, did not raise the issue of cancellation of debts. Instead the argument was raised that the farmers were not in favor of cancellation. But which farmers were opposed—rich or poor—was not raised by our comrades. The poor farmers obviously were in favor; they could only be won by such a slogan as that. But this our comrades did not fully grasp, and as a result our influence was not extended among the masses of farmers; we did not break the influence of the reformists.

There is still a third factor which contributed to the weakening of our agrarian work—the failure on the part of our comrades to study the developments under the A.A.A. and to bring forward the class demands of poor and middle farmers. All the material used in my report and much more that couldn't be used has been available each month since the beginning of the A.A.A. It was possible for us already a year ago or six or eight months ago to see clearly, on the basis of facts, aside from any general analysis that might have been made, the course that the A.A.A. was taking, and its effects on the poor and middle farmers. On the basis of that we could have brought issues and demands that would have enabled us to make a broad appeal to poor and middle farmers. This we did not do.

Probably most serious of all was the failure on the part of our comrades in the United Farmers League, in the Farmers National Committee of Action and in the editing of the *Farmers Weekly*, to react to the drought situation. The causes of the drought suffering in relation to the A.A.A. crop destruction program was not made a mass issue, and suitable and timely drought demands were not raised. We played almost a completely negative role during the drought period last year. But little effort was made to develop struggles of the farmers.

One must add that in the first period of the devastating dust storms of this spring which swept the Middle and South West, we

did not give sufficient attention to the development of farmers' struggles around the terrible suffering, resulting from the failure of the Roosevelt administration to provide proper relief and to take proper preventive measures.

#### TOO MUCH "CONFERENCING"

In our agrarian work there is a tendency to content ourselves with a sort of passing from one conference to another, a national conference and then a series of local conferences, and then another national conference and then more local conferences. There is insufficient concentration on continuous systematic work in the farm areas around local issues (relief, credits, foreclosures, etc.) and local struggles.

A word as to the Sioux Falls Conference, also with the objective of bringing out the opportunist tendencies which we met there. But first, let me say that the conference itself was a tremendous political success. But in the conference there was a marked hesitancy in bringing forward the Farmers Emergency Relief Bill in sharp opposition to those other bills sponsored by the reformists (Frazier-Lemke Bill; Thomas-Messingale Bill, etc.). There was a fear that the delegates from the Farmers Union, from the Holiday Association, etc., which support inflation, the cost-of-production bill, the refinancing bill, etc., would be lost to us if we brought forward our bill. There was a desire to bring forward a general resolution which would call for production credits, immediate relief, etc., but evading a clear-cut fight against the deeply rooted, bourgeois reformist conceptions reflecting the position of the middle and big farmers. This was corrected. Our proposals were put forward and the conference unanimously adopted our program as against those other measures which some comrades at the outset were afraid to fight against.

The first resolution on the Labor Party introduced, condemned the Republican Party and the Democratic Party and contained a vague formulation in favor of a Labor Party, but not in the sense of sharply counterposing a *class* Labor Party to a Farmer-Labor Party of the Minnesota type. And in the Middle West, to talk vaguely of a Labor Party without sharply placing it in opposition to the predominant Farmer-Labor conceptions is equivalent to building up sentiment for the Farmer-Labor Party movement—a bourgeois, third party movement.

These are some of the opportunist tendencies that until now have hampered our work. These tendencies must be uprooted in the Party together with all sectarian tendencies.

It is necessary now to develop a real mass campaign for the Farmers Emergency Relief Bill, as we developed one for the Work-

ers' Unemployment Insurance Bill. The basis exists in the countryside for the building of the same support for it.

In addition to this, the mass struggle must be developed in the townships and counties for immediate relief for the farmers who are now feeling the effects of the crisis, of the drought, of the dust storms, etc., and likewise in every county the demand for production credits, etc., must be raised as the starting point for state-wide movements to force the granting of relief and credits.

The fight against forced sales must not be dropped because as the figures show, this is still a very serious issue confronting large sections of farmers. Then other demands, such as higher wages on works relief projects, retention of the full income from this year's crop, the fight against the resettling of farmers in other areas, etc.

The work of penetrating the old-line farm organizations, particularly the Farmers' Union and the Holiday Association, stands out as the main task. This has been undertaken but weakly. From now on it must be pushed forward energetically in the countryside.

#### U.F.L. SHOULD BE UTILIZED TO DEVELOP UNITED FRONT ACTIONS

At the same time, it is necessary to combat the tendencies which have developed in some sections to liquidate the U.F.L. Such a policy would not be beneficial to our work. The problem of the U.F.L. is a problem confronting many sections of the country. There is no doubt that tendencies towards the liquidation of the U.F.L. reflect a desire to duplicate the changes made in our trade-union policy. This in some cases has been furthered by the correct directives given to our farm comrades to concentrate on the penetration of the mass farmers' organizations. But, comrades, we are opposed to liquidating the U.F.L.

In the first place, in line with the general policy of differentiation between the poorer farmers and the rich farmers, there are cases where now, particularly, the U.F.L. can serve a very effective purpose, and where the U.F.L. is a decisive force in certain counties and sections of the country. Certainly, in such cases, we should not consider the question of the liquidation of the U.F.L.

*The main problem is to utilize the U.F.L. as an instrument for the development of the united front with other farm organizations, locals, county bodies, etc., which are ready to fight on the basis of a class struggle program—that is, for the class needs of the poor and middle farmers. In this way we must broaden the mass base of the poor farmers' movement as distinct from the rich. The question of the retention, the merging or the liquidation of the U.F.L. should be approached with the clear aim before us of building a broad mass movement of the rural poor, and the struggle against the rich farmers.*

There are specific instances where today the U.F.L. is insignificant, where it has practically no membership or influence. In such cases, and considering each case individually, we can determine to liquidate the U.F.L., and to send farmers under our influence into the old-line organizations for the purpose of broadening the opposition movement of the poor and middle farmers. The working out of such tactics will depend upon the effectiveness with which we penetrate the old organizations and the effectiveness with which we develop the united front movement among the farmers.

In other cases a merger of the U.F.L. with a broader organization of the poor farmers might be the form of development; or it may take still other forms, including the building of the U.F.L. itself as a broad mass organization in some counties and states. But, at the moment, our general objective is to hold the U.F.L. in those places where it has a mass base, but adopting such policies as will further the united front of the poor in the countryside.

There is another point, however, which must be emphasized and that is this: the U.F.L. and the opposition groups in the other farm organizations, or any other form of farmers' organization cannot become a substitute for the Communist Party. And here we have to state quite frankly that hardly without exception our farm cadres have looked upon the U.F.L. as self-sufficient. Those who became members of the U.F.L. looked upon themselves as first-cousins of the Party. They were never made to see the necessity of becoming Party members. As a result, there was not a parallel development—the building of the U.F.L., the penetration of the old-line farm organizations, *and the building of the C.P.* Invariably, the building of the Party has been neglected. Moreover, there has not been even a consciousness on the part of the Party comrades, who worked as farm organizers, that they had a responsibility of their own in bringing forward and building the Party.

In this connection, it is necessary to say a word about the Nebraska situation and the remarks made by one of the farm comrades about the failure to build the Party and the failure to develop Party forces as the decisive factor in the decline of the movement there from thirty thousand members to practically nothing. The reason for this decline was certainly the failure to build the Party and the failure to develop Party leading forces. But I think that the comrade is wrong when he says that this failure is due to the weakness of the Party Section Organizer alone. I think it is equally due to the comrades, to the members of the Party, who were there in the capacity of organizers of the Holiday Association, of the mass farm movement. These comrades are Party people, who should themselves be Party organizers. It is up to these comrades to recruit for the

Party, to raise the political level of the farmers recruited, and prepare them for active participation in the building and leading of the broader movement of the farmers.

We have discussed this question in connection with trade-union work. We had comrades in trade-union work who thought it was their duty to build the union, and that it was the job of the Party Section Organizer to come down to the union, see which members were fit for the Party, recruit them and see to the proper functioning of the fractions, etc. One was the Party job, the other was the union job. And we have now among the farm comrades exactly the same approach. The responsibility for the Party rests on the Section Organizer, on the District office, etc., the responsibility for the farm work is theirs. But, comrades, with that kind of separation you will not build the Party and you will not build or lead the farm organizations. We have to say to our comrades engaged in this work that the building of the Party must go hand in hand with the mass work among the farmers. The training of new recruits to an understanding of the work of the Party is one of the main tasks that every one of us is confronted with.

#### MAJOR ATTENTION ON THE SOUTH AND MIDDLE WEST

As to the general immediate orientation of the Party in this field. We must state that the main orientation of the Party as a whole, and this applies to the distribution of farm cadres, must first be in the *South* and second in the *Middle Western farm areas*. If one studies the map we have available here based on 1929 at the outset of the crisis, and then considers the development since then, the long crisis, the drought effects, etc., one will see that the South and Middle Western areas are territories that must receive the major attention of the Party.

In addition there are special reasons why these two areas must receive major attention. In the South there is the Negro problem, coupled with the development of the sharecroppers' union and the Socialist controlled movement in Arkansas, the growing unity between white and Negro sharecroppers' movement, and the possibilities of extending this movement. In the Middle West, there is not only the possibility of building the farm movement on the basis of the conditions of the farmers, but there is also the predominance of Farmer-Laborism, and the possibility of building the Labor Party. The concentration in that area is of major importance in the fight against the third party movements which will find fertile field unless stopped by us.

Finally, I would like to state that the District Bureaus in Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Philadelphia and all other dist-

riots, which until now have looked upon themselves as only industrial districts, in all these cases must place comrades in charge of developing agrarian work in that territory and must see to it that every effort be made to spread the Party into smaller industrial communities.

We further propose that from the district center, workers' groups be organized to visit farm areas, to go out among the farmers, to secure contacts and lay the basis for the spreading of the Party in the rural districts. The system of rural Sundays, such as have been practised in Germany and other European countries, should be initiated. This can serve as a means of starting the penetration into these areas. With that start, the comrades will find that in most of the agricultural areas it will surprise them to know the number of farmers, agricultural laborers, etc., who have already been influenced by Communist and working-class ideas and who will quickly respond to the proposals brought forth by the Party.

Finally, I want to say a word on the question of small towns. Comrade Henderson will deal particularly with out work in the smaller industrial and rural towns, until now not reached by the Party. When this was discussed in the Political Bureau, it was proposed to issue to the Party the slogan: *Double the Number of Towns and Cities in Which There Are Party Units!* This is the task of every District and Section of the Party. The putting forward of such a slogan by the Sections, District Committees, etc., is a major immediate task of the Party. In raising this slogan and in emphasizing the importance of the countryside it does not follow necessarily that we can reach the farmers only after a march through the small towns. We cannot create for ourselves schematically a series of steps from the large towns to the small town and then into the country. To approach it in such a manner would hamper our penetration into the small towns, would hamper our penetration into the rural districts.

Comrade Henderson, who will follow, will deal particularly with work in smaller towns, the agricultural laborers and the effect of this on the broadening of our farm work.

I urge, in accord with the Political Bureau discussions, that the Districts now take up this work in the rural districts. It is important in the development of the farm struggles; it will draw the farmers into a class Labor Party; it will strengthen the anti-fascist forces and the anti-war forces. The revolutionary movement as a whole will gain in strength.

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# Roosevelt's "Happy Days" for the Young Generation

*(Report to the Meeting of the Central Committee,  
C.P.U.S.A., May 25-27, 1935)*

By GIL GREEN

THE subject for discussion at today's Central Committee meeting is the Civilian Conservation Camps. These camps cannot be considered as something separate and apart from the entire class struggle. The C.C.C. camps are one of the main planks of the New Deal program, and for this reason have special bearing on the whole struggle against the Roosevelt administration, against the growing danger of war and fascism.

Shortly after the inauguration of Roosevelt, a bill for the creation of the Civilian Conservation Corps was passed in the United States Congress. Immediately following the passage of the bill, hundreds of recruiting stations were established in all industrial cities and thousands of youth literally rushed to be enrolled. Within a period of a few months some 250,000 youth were gathered together in camps throughout the nation. The youth looked upon the camps as a temporary solution to the problem of unemployment. However, before many months had passed, a wave of struggle developed in the newly created camps.

In the main the struggles that swept through the camps were of a spontaneous character. They were expressed in various forms. First, mass desertions—from July to September, 1933, from 80,000 to 100,000 youth deserted the camps. Secondly, they took the form of mass protests within the camps, which in a number of places resulted in physical clashes between the men and their officers. And thirdly, the most important form was that of the strike struggle.

## FOOD AND DISCIPLINE MAIN STRUGGLE ISSUES

The issues around which these struggles developed were: First, the poor food conditions. The food allotment of the government was very low. Besides this, it was quite difficult at first to transport fresh food supplies to the various camps, as the transportation facil-



ities had not yet been created for this purpose. Thus, the boys lived in the main on canned food.

Secondly, the inadequate housing conditions. The early camps did not have established barracks. This affected the youth greatly, especially under changed climatic conditions, leading to increased disease and sickness which aroused great discontent.

Thirdly, revolts developed over poor working conditions. The boys who first went to the camps did not expect to work from eight to nine hours a day. They thought they were leaving on a spree. Then, from the very beginning, the army, which had been placed in charge, attempted to institute severe discipline. Thus there developed strong antagonism between the majority of the boys and their officers, resulting in numerous struggles.

For example, in Camp 1721, in Minnesota, the right of leave became a major issue. This developed into a strike struggle, then into a pitched battle between the men and their officers. The boys in many cases refused to accept the authority of the army officers as final and binding upon them. Where clauses were introduced asking the youth to pledge their readiness to defend their country, they protested against these and succeeded in defeating them.

The fourth issue was that of discrimination against Negroes. In the early camps there were Negro and white boys side by side, although separated in different barracks, the Negro youth getting the worst food and conditions. However, there developed a strong bond of unity between the Negro and the white youth. The youth felt their common unity and the need for common action. Today the Negro youth are isolated in separate camps, most of them led by Southern white officers.

One important struggle that took place in a Negro camp in Tuscaloosa is symptomatic of other such struggles. Here 200 boys went on strike against their Southern white officers. The militia was called out against them, and, being driven into the forest, they fought back with bricks and stones. A member of the Young Communist League and a few others were arrested and threatened with lynching. There were other similar incidents, as, for example, a camp near Gettysburg, where the boys applied a torch to their barracks and burned the camp to the ground.

This wave of struggle which swept the camps in the early months, together with the pressure from the outside—the fact that many workers and also some liberal and progressive elements were from the beginning greatly suspicious of the camps, and organized certain protest on the outside—resulted in a change of tactics on the part of the government, in certain concessions to the boys and in a slower tempo of militarization.

Together with this, the government divided the ranks of the men. In a limited sense they created a labor aristocracy within the camps. They selected the best workers, the natural gang leaders, and gave them an increased wage. While the wage for the boys is \$30 a month, \$25 of which is sent to their families, 5 per cent of the boys were given \$45 a month, and 8 per cent of the boys were given \$36 a month. These privileged boys were permitted to keep a large percentage of this additional money for themselves. This is, of course, a substantial bribe for a boy who previously had received only \$5 for himself. This had its effect in utilizing certain groups among the boys against the more militant ones.

Secondly, they developed a gap between the veterans and the youth. There are from 28,000 to 30,000 veterans within the camps.

Thirdly, they reversed the original policy of sending youth to camps close to their home localities and decided instead, in order to make desertion more difficult, to send them far away from their homes. Together with this they decided that in no one camp would there be a majority of youth from any one locality.

Fourthly, a system of fines was established. A youth who breaks discipline is fined. For throwing a cigarette on the grass he may be fined as high as a dollar, for returning late after his leave is up, three dollars. These fines come from the \$5 that the boys get monthly. Some of the most militant boys thus found themselves forfeiting their wages for a month or two in advance.

Fifthly, the policy of expelling all so-called radicals and agitators. Here, comrades, it is interesting to note that in the period of the first year the camps expelled more than 16,000 under the classification of "agitators" and "radicals". The majority of these youth actually knew very little about our movement, but were militant youth who wanted to fight for their immediate demands.

#### FROM "HAPPY DAYS" TO "WE CAN TAKE IT"

Of greater importance than even these other points I mentioned were the steps taken to develop a special ideology within the camps. When the camps were first instituted, the phrase *Happy Days*, the title of the official C.C.C. paper, expressed the attempt of the government to make youth look upon the camps as a medium for a good time. But as the camps became established, they realized that "happy days" did not exactly fit the actual situation. They put forth another slogan: "We can take it". Around this, they developed a special morale and ideology. They compared the camps with the army in 1917. They said: "In 1917 youth fought an external foe, in 1935 youth must sacrifice to fight an internal foe—the depression." "In 1917 youth underwent sacrifices for their country.

The youth of 1935 must also be ready to sacrifice." They issued a special pamphlet entitled *We Can Take It*. This literature and propaganda worked to imbue the youth with this ideology. Many of the youth accepted this, feeling that at least until better times, the camps are necessary, and that through the camps the government is trying to do something for them. To imbue the youth more effectively with this feeling, the government attempted to isolate the camps completely from the struggles going on in the rest of the country. The weekly camp paper, *Happy Days*, does not carry a single line on what is happening nationally or internationally. It only carries news dealing with the camps.

All these measures were connected with a systematic tightening of the discipline in the camps, with an increased productivity and speed-up. They also introduced a process of slow militarization: drill, squad formation and special uniforms. The authority of the army became the supreme authority within the camps.

There is no doubt but that these tactics on the part of the government resulted in a certain stabilization within the camps. Today the C.C.C.'s have become a permanent feature of our American life. These camps still have their power to attract youth. Despite the fact that many youth have returned and told horrible tales of conditions in the camps, yet in the main, large masses of youth are still willing to go. The youth within the camps in their largest numbers are also not deserting, but remaining. This is important in order to draw a distinction between the camps in America and those in Europe. The camps in America cannot as yet be classified as forced labor camps. There is of course economic compulsion, but that it all. The youth enter and stay in the camps voluntarily.

We must not, however, make the mistake of believing that all is well within the camps. The struggles continue from day to day. The conditions are certainly not good. The youth are dissatisfied, if not only for the economic conditions in the camps, at least for the social problems which arise because of the fact that the youth are being isolated from their homes. Discontent also results from the very high rate of accidents. In 1934, 871 were killed in accidents, and thousands of youth were injured and crippled for life.

#### NEW WAVE OF STRUGGLE IS DEVELOPING

The perspective in the next months is for a new wave of struggle within the camps. Why? Because first of all the Roosevelt government has achieved its first objective, namely, the establishment of the C.C.C. as a permanent institution. Now the government, in line with its second offensive against the working class as a whole, is beginning to follow a policy of definite retrenchment within the

camps. First, the 37 cents a day for food means less and less for the youth, as prices rise. Secondly, there is talk of a wage cut—a cut of wages from \$30 to \$25 a month. While not yet instituted, this seems to be the definite policy in Washington once the proposed low wages on relief projects become established facts. Thirdly, despite temporary slowing down of militarization of the camps as a concession to the militant resistance of the boys, there is a growing trend in Washington for openly militarizing the camps in a short period of time. The McSwain Bill pending before Congress, while not likely to be adopted at this session, calls for making the C.C.C. a definite army reserve. And this seems to be the Bill of the army and of the administration, although Roosevelt has not yet seen fit to come out openly for it. He first wants to test the reaction of the masses to the proposal. The campaign in the *New York Daily News*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and in the press generally for militarization of the camps is part of the campaign of the administration itself, as expressed in the C.C.C. paper *Happy Days*, and will in the next months or year undoubtedly result in further attempts completely to militarize the camps.

Now as to our work within the camps. We can state that many of the struggles within the camps were either led by us or directly under our influence. There were hundreds of strikes that Y.C.L.'ers participated in and took leadership. However, it must be clear that with 1,600 camps in existence today, and some 2,600 camps to be in existence by the end of 1935, it is quite impossible for the Y.C.L. with its present forces to be in every one of these camps. In most places the struggles were not so much led by Y.C.L.'ers as influenced by our general policy and tactics. Many of the youth have had contact with the Unemployment Councils, with the farm movements led by us, with the student movements, etc.

The result has been that even large masses of youth who were not in our ranks, at least were ready to follow our line within the camps. In many cases youth who had no contact with us carried through our policy because of their experiences in the class struggle.

From the very beginning of the camps, we worked for developing a mass movement of youth in the form first of elected committees of the youth within each camp, and secondly, in the form of a union—an economic organization of the youth. We have not succeeded to any extent in either one of these objectives. Elected committees were established in many camps around specific grievances, but after the grievances were met and the struggle was over, the radical or militant elements were usually expelled and the committees disappeared. Nowhere did the camp committees assume a permanent character. Regarding the economic organization, in New

York State we helped build an organization—the C.C.C. Boys' Protective League. At most we were able to build groups in a few camps, some of which exist today.

Thus, despite the issuance of leaflets, of camp papers in four states, and of work in a number of concentrated areas, in the main we have remained isolated from the majority of the youth in the camps. What are the main reasons for this isolation on our part?

#### POLITICAL UNCLARITY ON SLOGANS

First, we must state that there was political unclarity in the ranks of the Y.C.L. on what our attitude should be towards the camps. In the period up to the League Convention, in June, 1934, we put forward as our main slogan, "smash" or "abolish the camps". In the early period this slogan had some basis in reality, because of the fact that thousands of youth were leaving the camps. But even then this slogan was wrong. But in the period of the consolidation of the camps this became doubly wrong because it did not flow from the demands of the youth and could only lead to isolating us from the majority of the youth. This slogan meant to the youth being forced to go back to the bread line, and to them at least the camps were better than breadlines. And secondly, it encouraged all kinds of "Leftist" errors among our Y.C.L. comrades. We had comrades who thought their best work was to see how fast they could get out of the camp after they once got in.

With the aid of Comrade Browder and the Political Bureau we changed this slogan and recognized the fact that the camps were accepted by the youth as a lesser evil. We changed our slogan from "abolish the camps" to "replace the camps with unemployment insurance or jobs with regular wages".

Today, however, in discussing practically the building of a broad movement, it is our opinion that we even have to modify this slogan so that we put forward only positive demands. To the youth outside the camps—our demand must be "unemployment insurance", and for the youth within the camps we must put forward concrete demands that they are ready to fight for, and which, if granted and carried, will change the entire nature and character of the camps. The main demands we put forward are:

1. Increase the base pay to \$45 a month; and trade union rates for skilled men, such as chauffeurs, plumbers, electricians.
2. A 50 per cent increase in food allotment;
3. Keep the camps out of army control; no military drill, formations, etc.; oust the army officers;
4. The right of the boys to organize, and recognition of all elected men's committees;

5. No discrimination against Negro youth; oust the Southern white officers;
6. Protection against accident, adequate compensation for injury; pension to family in case of death.

#### MAIN ERROR WAS NEGLECT OF WORK

The main mistake of our League was not so much that of commission, but of omission—the fact that there was relatively little work developed among the youth in the C.C.C. camps. When I say "League" I do not mean the Y.C.L. alone; I mean the Party and the League, but the League, of course, has the main responsibility for work here.

Why was work not developed in most places? First, because of certain organizational difficulties that confront our Party and League; the fact that it necessary to take forces out of the present-day work and send them hundreds of miles away. In many sections of the Party and League the comrades have a very provincial, narrow approach to this work. They refuse to give up forces that are active in their sections or units for work in camps that may be located hundreds of miles away.

We further have difficulty in giving leadership to our people within the camps. In most places where there are camps, especially in the isolated regions, our Party and League are very weak. Then, even where there is a Party, it is very difficult to connect this local organization with our comrades in the camps as these may come from New York and land in Oregon, Washington, or New Mexico. Even when they are connected, we find the districts lack the necessary apparatus by which to give leadership to these C.C.C. comrades.

However, these difficulties can be overcome if the Party and League will understand the political significance of these camps, and the relation they bear to the entire New Deal program—to the whole process of fascization in the country.

What is the significance of the camp movement in America?

1. It establishes a precedent for low wages. The low wage rates recently decided on for relief work can be traced to the low wage precedent first established by Roosevelt in the C.C.C. camps. If farmers are today being sent to Alaska at a wage of a dollar a day, this too can be traced to the original Roosevelt C.C.C. policy.

2. The government wishes to establish the camps as a permanent army reserve. By 1936 the camps will include 600,000 youth. The government policy is to propose then once more an enlargement to at least one million. The recognition of the camps as military reserves can be seen by the following remark of General McArthur: "I think there would be nothing finer than that men

in the C.C.C. camps should be used as a nucleus for an enlisted army." And all the comrades remember the words of Woodring, Assistant Secretary of War, in January, 1934.

The camps are definitely becoming the American form of conscription. In the U. S. there never has been universal conscription as in Europe. If attempted now, the masses will not accept it. Thus conscription in this country cannot be established openly. It will be done in a round-about manner. The camps are becoming the American form of conscription. Already proposals are being made to establish camps for all youths who come out of school, so that every boy, before he grows to manhood, will have gone through a period of training. This was expressed in an article in the *Wall Street Journal*, which stated the following:

"Suppose that every one of our young men, on reaching a certain age, were assigned for six months or a year to a conservation camp where he would live an active, disciplined life, learn how to obey (in order to learn how to command) and besides, pick up much useful knowledge of how to take care of himself and others in the outdoors—would that not help to build character?"

This proposal of the *Wall Street Journal* is being discussed more and more. In actual fact the doubling of the size of the camps to include 600,000 youth means that in a few years the bulk of America's unemployed youth will have gone through the camps. Already more than a million youth have seen service in the camps.

3. The government also hopes to train the youth within the camps as shock troops of fascism within the ranks of the working class. It is from this important view that we must judge the actions of the government in isolating these youth from the industrial centers. This explains the actions in Boston, where C.C.C. boys were used as scabs. This explains the fact that outside the camps, the government is working to create ex-C.C.C. boys' organizations. In New Jersey, through the Y.M.C.A. there was organized what is called the Green Legion, an organization which aims to propagate the views and ideals of the C.C.C. among the youth generally.

The aim of American capitalism, to win these youth as fascist shock troops, can be seen in the speech made by Howard Oxley, formerly in charge of personnel training for the New York Standard Oil Company, at a conference of C.C.C. officers and educators. He said:

"I know what they want down in Wall Street. (This is not for publication.) We'd rather have your men who have been in camp fifteen months. They work under discipline. When they come to us they don't ask, 'How long do we work?' Not the young men

from the C.C.C.; they're tough, these men. Ask Dooley, personnel man for Standard Oil. He'll tell you. So many men today come out of school and they're soft. They say, 'How long do I work?' But not when they go through the C.C.C."

And this speech contains the approach of the large corporations and American capitalism generally.

#### OUR TASKS

What are our tasks? I will divide our tasks into two main sections: One—the development of the broadest mass movement within the camps; and secondly—the mobilization of the whole working class and of all progressive elements in behalf of the demands of the youth in the camps and against their militarization.

Regarding the first: here we must, around the demands that I read before, help the youth within the camps to develop a broad movement which will embrace all youth ready to fight for improved conditions. In the course of developing such a movement we must utilize what is now being discussed in the various camps—the establishment of camp councils. The authorities, owing to this pressure, find it necessary to give some means of expression to the youth, and are discussing the setting up of special councils, elected by the boys, in every camp. These councils, of course, they will attempt to use in order to control the men; but we, in turn, must take the initiative in order to transform these councils into real committees of the men which will fight for their demands and against the army authorities. We can develop mass struggles through these councils and turn these councils into instruments of the boys.

What is necessary to develop a broad movement around these demands?

1. The sending of hundreds of young comrades and veterans into the camps during the next months. From now until October, the camps will enroll some 300,000 additional men so as to increase their size to 600,000. We must get the young comrades and veterans over whom we have influence to enter the camps and work from within them. But not alone must we select people; we must give those selected some training before they go in. In every district, the Party must work together with the League to select comrades, then organize a class with them, discuss the problems within the camps, the methods of work to be used, etc., so that when they enter these camps they will know how to proceed to work in the broadest possible manner.

2. We must follow a policy of concentration. It is obvious that we cannot work in all of the 2,600 camps. First, we must have certain districts of concentration, and in turn, in these districts,



various sections and camps of concentration. The districts of concentration should be California, New York, Minnesota, Upper Michigan, and Alabama. However, this does not mean that the other districts are to neglect this work. Even a small state such as New Jersey has 48 C.C.C. camps, and certainly there the problem of reaching the youth is not difficult. In all states where we have a Party and League, it is possible to develop mass work.

In these points of concentration, we must work for the development of the mass movement and for the building of League units. Where there are veterans, we must work to create Party and League units within the camps.

Nationally, we are proposing to help the organized groups of youth within the camps to publish their own mass paper. This paper has already been prepared and will be off the press in a few days. This paper will be edited by youth in the camps, and will deal with their daily problems, will be the organ of united front struggle within the camps. This paper must get the support of the districts. It will appear, to start with, once a month. The districts must organize an apparatus to help distribute the paper, and must see to it that correspondence comes in for it, so that the paper can become a real weapon, a real competitor to *Happy Days*.

In these districts of concentration, it is necessary to select certain cadres who will devote most of their time to this work. I am not speaking now of people who will go into the camps themselves, but of leading cadres who will guide the work in these camps from the outside. It is necessary in a district like Minnesota to assign two or three people from the Party and League who will really become specialists in C.C.C. work, visiting the camps and giving real help to those within them. Although we must use our various section committees, we find that besides the section apparatus, we need special people who will be organizers from the outside.

Furthermore, we must mobilize the farm movement, the various sympathetic mass organizations in the small towns (I.W.O., language organizations), in order to help develop this work. We had some sad experiences with some of our comrades in language organizations who looked upon the youth in the camps as fascists. We must break down this attitude, because we find among the masses, especially in the smaller towns, an attitude towards these boys similar to that expressed towards the army and navy. These youth, when they get into town, generally act in the same manner as the fleet when it comes to port. They want to have a good time; they go on a spree, and often get into fights. It is clear that our comrades should try to break down the antagonism among the workers resulting from this. We must invite these boys to our affairs, make

friends with them, invite them to our homes, so as to give them some cultural life. In this respect we also have some good experiences in some of the farm localities where we have Finnish Halls and Finnish organizations. The comrades have made these halls centers for the C.C.C. boys—they come to the dances, hold discussions, etc. If we utilized all our centers in Minnesota and Michigan, for example, for developing some movement within the camps, they could greatly aid us in winning the youth for our program.

In these five concentration districts, we must also begin to issue special camp papers. Minnesota, Michigan, and California are already undertaking to do this. They have issued papers before, but these have not appeared regularly. The Party must see to it that these appear regularly and reach the largest number of youth.

#### WHOLE WORKING CLASS MUST BE AROUSED

Now as to the second—the mobilization of the working class as a whole.

1. To develop a broad movement within the A. F. of L., a movement which will first of all raise opposition to the low wages within the camps, and the fact that the youth are more and more replacing skilled labor on various jobs. We can make it very hot for Fechner, who is head of the C.C.C. camps and is also Vice-President of the International Association of Machinists. Together with this, the Unemployment Councils must develop activities among the parents of the boys in the city, and among the working class generally, to educate them as to the character of the C.C.C. camps and to mobilize them for the demands of the youth in the camps.

2. We must, through the Youth Congress and the American League Against War and Fascism, develop a mass campaign in the working class against the process of militarization going on in the camps. We can, around this one issue, develop mass support in all the youth organizations in the country. Already we find that Y's, settlement houses, churches, etc., have adopted our position on the C.C.C. camps. But as yet, the adoption of our position has not resulted in concrete actions; and here we must work to get the American Youth Congress as well as the American League Against War and Fascism to organize broad sections of workers, liberals, progressives, etc., to visit the camps, to investigate the conditions there, to investigate the relation of the army to the boys, the process of militarization, and to mobilize the working class as a whole to defeat this militarization of the C.C.C. boys.

Through the work in the A. F. of L. on the one hand, and the united front youth movement on the other, we can develop the

broadest movement of the working class and all progressive elements, simultaneous with the development of the struggle in the camps.

How can we guarantee that the struggles within the camps will be successful and that the youth will follow our leadership? The demands outlined here have already been proved correct by life itself—by the struggles of the boys. But guaranteed success is possible only if we orientate the League and the Party, through our everyday leadership towards systematic work within and around the camps, in such a way as to connect every struggle in the C.C.C. camps with the developing class struggle in the country.

It is not an accident that in many districts, as, for example, in California, where a large number of camps are located, leading comrades in the Party and League not alone do not know what is going on in the camps, but even where they are located.

I want to emphasize in the name of the Polbureau the need for making a drastic change in this work. The Party from top to bottom must take the leadership and feel the responsibility for developing this work so that within the shortest possible time we can have a mass movement within the camps. Otherwise, we face the grave danger that the ruling class will succeed in its plans to militarize and fascize the millions of unemployment youth.

We will not permit this to happen. We will change the character of the camps, prevent their fascization, and win the youth for revolutionary struggle.

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## ERRATUM

A serious typographical error crept into Comrade F. Brown's article "Toward the Study of Fascization in the U. S." in the June issue of *The Communist*.

On page 562 in the paragraph beginning with the words "In Germany as in Italy, Social-Democracy paved the way for fascism", there appears lower down a sentence which reads: "German Social-Democracy did not pave the way for fascism, but in its various theories and practices of class collaboration and of arbitration, itself brought forward fascist trends to check the struggle of the masses."

This is clearly an error and is explainable by the unfortunate typographical omission of the word "only" after "did not". We wish to draw the attention of our readers to this error.

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